

# ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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Journal of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

# THE BOLSHOI BALLET, 1963

Natalya Roslavleva

SINCE both the Bolshoi and the Kirov Ballets have appeared in the western world much ink has been spilt concerning the difference between the two companies. Personally I think that much more important are the things obviously common to them: the general principles underlying all of the Soviet ballet; its method of realism, its function—that of reflecting true life in art form, however seemingly conventional; its preference for heroic, elevating themes; its treatment of the *corps de ballet* as an equal member of the company and the given performance, expected to understand fully the meaning and aim of the ballet and each individual part. The technique of Soviet ballet, taught in twenty of its state schools (before the revolution there were two), is based on a uniform method worked out by the Soviet school of ballet and based on the system of Professor Agrippina Vaganova. And yet, however uniform the methods and the syllabuses, there is a difference between each and every one of the thirty-four ballet companies of Soviet ballet, and that is a healthy sign. It would be unbearable if one company were a replica of another.

There is, beyond doubt, some distinction between the ballets of Moscow and Leningrad. Each company has its own face, its merits and its distinctive features.

It is considered that Leningrad dancers are more elegant, more careful about small details of technique that lend a note of perfection to their performance both as individuals and, particularly, as a whole.

The Bolshoi dancers are more exhilarating, more exuberant, in their style of dancing, their movements are broader, their jumps are more sweeping and soaring, their projection is very powerful. Among other things this is born of the necessity to dance on a very large stage and to project for a very large audience (it was always a good Bolshoi tradition to act through dancing in such a manner that the very last spectator in the sixth tier of the red-and-gold auditorium would feel the impact). The great Bolshoi ballerina Yekaterina Geltser was a past master at this kind of dancing while remaining a perfectionist of classical technique.

Perhaps the elegantly restrained style of the Mariinsky dancers developed because they danced for the orchestra seats, filled with the *élite* of St. Petersburg aristocracy and court officials. Yet what is today an objectively existing fact is that the academic technique of the Kirov school and company, wherein the smallest step is brilliantly danced, belongs to the most valuable heritages of Soviet ballet.

This does not mean that there are no dancers capable of dancing in this very same style in the Bolshoi Ballet. Suffice it to mention Marina Kondratieva, the entirely Moscow-trained young ballerina, but there are quite a few more.

We are speaking here of the dominant general style of the Moscow ballet. It was historically determined and is born of a very good tradition. The Bolshoi Ballet is a direct descendant of the group of dancers trained by the Italian Filippo Beccari from 1773 at the Moscow Orphanage, and hired in 1776 by the Englishman Michael Maddox for his company founded in partnership with Prince Urusov. The Bolshoi Ballet thus dates from 1776, and it has been dancing on the same site since 1780, when Michael Maddox, by then independent of the bankrupt Prince Urusov, built a magnificent opera house,

called Petrovsky because, like the present Bolshoi, it was built along Petrovka Street. Several theatres were destroyed by fire, until the present building was erected in 1856. Actually, though outwardly it still looks the same, the Bolshoi has been completely modernised and renovated several times since the revolution. At present its spacious premises backstage are much larger than the part visible to the audience, and consist of comfortable dressing rooms, rehearsal rooms, showers, canteens and storages for costumes and settings.

Much has changed in the Bolshoi Theatre in the 187 years of its existence, but many good traditions have remained intact.

Of special importance for the Bolshoi Ballet was the work of the reformer of ballet, Alexander Gorsky. When Gorsky was transferred to Moscow from the St. Petersburg Ballet in 1898 he was tremendously impressed by the Moscow Art Theatre, opened in the same year. He came into very close contact with its founders and applied their methods and principles in his first independent work—a new production of *Don Quixote*. That was in 1900—four years before Fokine put his ideas of ballet reform on paper and at least six years before he was able to partly implement them in a small ballet. Gorsky arranged the crowd scenes in the first act of *Don Quixote* as it would have been done at the Art Theatre. The smallest super had his ‘actor’s task’. Everyone was expected to identify himself with the character he was to portray. A living, lively crowd was created on the stage of the Bolshoi. At first it was disliked by balletomanes and critics accustomed to orderly frozen lines of the *corps de ballet*. Shortly, however, Gorsky’s production was transferred to the Mariinsky Theatre as well. In his later works Gorsky tended to overdo heavy dramatic mime to the detriment of dancing. In his urge for reform in ballet he was not careful enough about preserving the classical legacy. But luckily the classical technique was well taken care of at the Bolshoi School and Company by Vassily Tikhomirov, one of the greatest Russian teachers of ballet.

Gorsky was great in another respect. He was responsible for fostering and discovering a constellation of talent that can hardly be compared with any other period in the history of the Bolshoi. In Gorsky’s time were formed such virile, handsome, expressive dancers as Mordkin, Volinin, Svoboda, Zhukov, Fedor and Alexei Koslov, and many others. Gorsky’s ballerinas were also dramatically very expressive—suffice it to mention Geltser. But he was particularly good at discovering and training a new type of actress-dancer, such as the incomparable Fedorova II.

Gorsky died after the revolution of 1917, but did not live to see the full development of Soviet ballet. His pupils, such as Asaf Messerer, went much farther in the fight against routine, against conventional mime, for the establishment of truth in acting. The Bolshoi ballet was the first to create, in 1927, a successful ballet to a contemporary theme—*The Red Poppy*. In the 1930s, through merging the experience of the Leningrad and Moscow schools and transferring new repertoires to the Bolshoi stage, a new homogeneous style of Soviet ballet was gradually welded.

Yet the Bolshoi Ballet, while keeping within this general style, retained ‘its own face’, as the nineteenth-century Russian poet Tyutchev put it.

But let us return to the Bolshoi Ballet of today. Is it the same as it was in 1956? It is certainly not, and that will be the exciting thing about it for the careful observer.

Of course, the retirement of Galina Ulanova is an irreparable loss to the art of ballet in general. A dancer of such exquisite artistry might not be born for another 100 years. But there is so much fresh and promising talent in the present company—the stately Yelena Ryabinkina; the graceful Natalya Bessmertnova, who succeeds in looking at once like Pavlova and Spessivtzeva; her

classmate the virtuosity dancer Nina Sorokina; the temperamental and virile Mikhail Lavrovsky—a *premier danseur* in his own right who does not need the protection of his father, the chief ballet master of the Bolshoi, Leonid Lavrovsky; the only slightly older Yekaterina Maximova, pupil of the great teacher Yelizaveta Gerdt, and her husband, Vladimir Vassiliev—a dancer of really tremendous virtuosity and impact, who is only waiting for special roles to be created around him. Then there are ballerinas of the more purely academic style, such as Moscow-trained Marina Kondratieva (exquisite as Giselle and the Muse in *Paganini*) and Leningrad-trained Nina Timofeyeva (who, after being considered a strictly classical ballerina, surprised everyone by her very interesting characterisation in the role of the Girl in *Night City* (Bartok's *Miraculous Mandarin*), choreographed for her by Lavrovsky.

The *prima ballerina* of the company is now Maya Plisetskaya, People's Artist of the USSR. In the years that have passed since 1956, when she did not come to London, she has attained her full flowering. Plisetskaya is a true *prima ballerina* possessing great plastic beauty of line and great purity of school. This alone would do for a classical ballerina. But she is more than that. She is a very great dancer-actress, capable of conveying deep feeling with the help of her eloquent body. Besides her best role of Odette-Odile she is going to dance Juliet in London. I do not know whether she will succeed in attaining the heights of Ulanova, who was Shakespeare's poetry itself. But one thing is certain: Plisetskaya has created her own characterisation of a young girl from the period of High Renaissance, based on a close study of Botticelli and other painters. For those who saw *Romeo and Juliet* in 1956 there will be many new faces. Yelena Vanke, a dancer who has now passed on to mime roles and proved to be an excellent actress, is now Lady Capulet, successfully replacing Yelena Ilyushchenko. The great Bolshoi mime Alexander Radunsky, who retired last year and has just been to London in the capacity of choreographer of the Red Army group of singers and dancers, is not as easily replaced. So far his roles have been taken not by one but by several members of the company in each separate instance, but without much success. The same applies to the new Capulet—Alexander Begak. The new Mercutio, Vladimir Levashov, who is an excellent character dancer, cannot, either, replace Sergei Koren, who came with the company in 1956 and has since retired. Koren was second in this role only to Andrei Lopukhov, its creator at the Kirov Theatre in 1939.

Naturally, a change of casts over a period of seven years means some debits and credits. Among the retired dancers is Susanna Zvyagina, remembered for her performance of the Spanish dance in the third act of *Swan Lake*. There are, however, several very good new character dancers. Prominent among them is Natalya Kasatkina. She deserves attention for another reason, too. Together with her husband, Vladimir Vasilyev (also a character dancer), she choreographed *Vanina Vanini*, a successful one-act ballet to music by Nikolai

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Karetnikov, a young Soviet composer, and to a story borrowed from Stendhal. The choreographers are at present working on a new ballet, *Geologists*, to music by the same composer and on a contemporary theme. They are a bright young couple, full of ideas, and very determined. Vasilyev has written an interesting article in the January issue of *Yunost*, wherein he defends the right for a highly stylised form of choreography even for contemporary themes (citing Belsky's *Leningrad Symphony* as an example) and strongly objects to any use of pantomime in ballet borrowed directly from the dramatic theatre. His article is written in the form of a dialogue with 'a little dancing man' who maintains that a ballet is exciting for him only if he is given ample chance to dance and is expected to convey the story of ballet through dance action. It is interesting that Vasilyev ends his article with the following words: 'I think that ballet is at present living through a transition period. It is selecting some things and accepting them, and rejecting others. Much has been done already, but there is much struggle ahead with routine. Numerous experiments are needed until we are able to create ballets that would wholly answer the growing requirements of our times.'

This necessity for experiment was also stressed by Leonid Lavrovsky in one of his recent speeches. The Bolshoi Company, he said, was badly in need of a smaller experimental stage where it could create new ballets—not necessarily big ones, but perhaps good nevertheless (since 1956 Lavrovsky has himself created two successful one-act ballets—*Paganini* and *Night City*).

At present the Bolshoi has a second stage in the form of the huge Kremlin Palace of Congresses.

Some of the Bolshoi ballets—*Swan Lake*, *Raymonda*, *Cinderella*—are shown on this stage, which, through its vast dimensions, demands some changes in the productions and a further increase in the power of projection. It is a very useful experience, particularly for the numerous young dancers. But the Bolshoi Company hopes to get a small experimental stage in addition to this and was tentatively promised the use of one of the Moscow theatres for the purpose. This is partly what Galina Ulanova wrote about in her recent *Izvestia* article, but she was actually dreaming about a large ballet theatre, existing independently from the opera. At present this is probably impracticable. It is also questionable whether it is worth while breaking the ancient Russian tradition, according to which ballet and opera companies exist alongside as two halves of one whole, as a result of which ballet in operas is performed at a very high level.

As we see from Vasilyev's article, the Bolshoi youth is ready for serious work and means it. There are other choreographers springing up—Alexander Lapauri in partnership with Olga Tarasova (they studied together at the Choreographers' Faculty of the Theatre Institute) has just done an interesting ballet in the grotesque vein to the music of Prokofiev's suite *Lieutenant Kije*, using many forgotten virtuosity movements of classical technique, but always for the purpose of characterising the military epoch of Paul I.

Mansur Kamaletdinov (a character dancer) is doing a version of *Capriccio Espagnol*. Several other ballets are contemplated by the Bolshoi Theatre, which has never had as many planned works at one and the same time. Nothing really great has as yet been created, but the very atmosphere is charged with a creative urge, with the realisation of the necessity to create a contemporary ballet truly worthy of our times.

As Erik Diatlov, artist of the Bolshoi ballet and assistant Party secretary of the Bolshoi Theatre, wrote in *Soviet Artist*, the theatre's own journal: 'We have no right to work today in the way we worked yesterday. We have accumulated rich experience and it is time to sum everything up.'

The youth of the Bolshoi Theatre is sure to get things going.

# NATALYA GONCHAROVA

V. Lidin

In this article a distinguished Soviet novelist describes a meeting he had with Natalya Goncharova in Paris some time not long before her death in 1962. Those who knew her personally will find the poignancy of Lidin's evocation of the artist doubly moving as they recall her memory with him.

THE small streets in this part of Paris bear the names of poets and artists—Millet, Teniers, Heinrich Heine, Daumier, Corot. . . . And among them a little old street has lost itself—the *Rue Jacques Callot*, named after the French engraver who created the famous series *The Calamities of War*.

We sat down at a table outside a corner café facing a small square. Here, Paris was the same as a quarter of a century ago, when I happened to be in the same square; or rather, it is the same as a whole century ago. The houses surrounding the square were probably built in the eighteenth century, sombre with green *jalousies* on the windows, and with yellowish-pink tiled roofs, chimneys stuck into them like flower pots. In the back room of the café some habitués were playing *belotte*.

In this square, in a house which is sombre and uncomfortable yet beloved by several generations of artists, there lived for almost half a century two artists whose names are connected with the most brilliant efflorescence of Russian ballet in Paris, with the names of Diaghilev and Stravinsky, Ravel and Debussy, Matisse and Picasso—Natalya Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov.

I lingered awhile, however, before entering the house, in which I had not been for so many years—time has passed over it, and over those who have lived in it, has aged them, has perhaps deprived them of the sharpness of their eyes, which searched all colours. . . .

With this vague feeling we—I and my companion artist—climbed up a steep staircase to the fourth floor. On the door of the flat where Natalya Sergeyevna Goncharova lived—the ailing Larionov had at that time been taken to Switzerland—was a notice: 'Knock louder'. We did. Then we knocked again and again. At last we heard steps behind the door, and a feeble female voice asked: 'Who is there?' We named ourselves. Natalya Sergeyevna took a long time to open the door; we came in, and I saw the artist. Her poor hands that in the past had used a decorative brush in masterly fashion were deformed by rheumatism, and she herself was emaciated, as if scarcely existing. Several months before this meeting the Moscow public had seen her superb *décor* and costumes for *The Firebird*, performed by the Royal Ballet. I remember how the *décor* itself at once created a festive atmosphere; and I, like so many others, was proud that it was by a Russian artist.

I reminded Natalya Sergeyevna of our meeting many years ago. She listened wearily. She was ill, and so was Larionov; old age had caught them with all that it brings, and much seemed irrevocable.

'You know, Natalya Sergeyevna', I said, 'English ballet was recently in Moscow, and I saw *Firebird* with your *décor* and costumes. I know that many connoisseurs of art wished to be in the Bolshoi Theatre just to see your *décor*.'

She raised her eyes, and there suddenly happened what can only be called a transfiguration; probably only artists are capable of this.

'Is it true?' she asked, looking at me with youthfully illumined eyes. 'Is it true they have not altogether forgotten me in Moscow?'



Her weak, helpless body seemed to become supple and tense; she saw what a true artist never forgets, no matter how much time has passed and whatever trials have befallen.

She had already lived in Paris for half a century. The history of Russian ballet is connected with her name, and has shared in the triumph of Russian art which has been conquering the world; and in speaking of Diaghilev one cannot forget Goncharova.

'I still continue working', Natalya Sergeyevna said suddenly. 'Of course, I can no longer paint pictures, but I take a pencil with both hands and draw.' She joined her deformed hands and showed how she held a pencil. She wanted to live as an artist and to continue behaving as an artist.

Here in this flat—from the studio of which I had in the past gazed at the old roofs of Paris, at its tender sky of misty lilac—her artistic life had passed, here reached the tide of glory by which Russian Ballet, with its music and painting, was crowned. Here probably had come Alexander Benois, Bakst, Debussy and Ravel. . . .

I gave Natalya Sergeyevna a Russian *emelushka*, that magnificent doll made in our country. She took it almost with tenderness.

'I will get a photo taken of it and send it to Mikhail Fedorovich to Switzerland', she said. 'This is a marvellous medicine—thank you. I have felt since this morning that something good would happen today.'

She pressed the Moscow *emelushka* to her chest.

'Excuse me, but I am always afraid to give my hand lest it be hurt. My hands are so tender.' Nevertheless she put her hand on my palm. Her eyes were slightly covered with moisture. Together with that good which she had been expecting came reminiscences, and when an artist has to hold a pencil with both hands such reminiscences cannot be light.

I had wanted to see Goncharova once more; and although my image of this emaciated woman did not coincide with the one I had known before I shall not forget the youthful brilliance of her eyes when conversation touched upon her art, and the striving of all her being, as if a curtain were raised and she again saw Stravinsky's *Les Noces* and *Firebird* and *Le Coq d'Or*.

We were descending the gloomy staircase, already grey in the twilight, in silence. I had the feeling that we had come to say the last goodbye to Goncharova and now, when she is dead, I understand that it was so. For the last time the distinguished artist laid her poor deformed hand on my palm. On my wall hangs a picture of an ethereal, beautiful Spanish woman by Natalya Goncharova; every time I look at this portrait I recall the shining life of the artist who so often captivated spectators with her art, and who held a pencil until her last hour, so that not a single day should pass without a sketch or at least an arabesque.

*Teatr*. February 1963.

Translated by V.K.

# LAW IN THE SOVIET UNION

John Platts-Mills

WHEN I was in Leningrad a few months ago a professional chauffeur was executed for bad driving. This was a startling introduction to a three-week visit to lawyers and law institutions. It gave plenty of scope for asking questions in the course of a dozen informal talks with groups of lawyers in their consulting chambers, at court and at local city bar associations; it stimulated plenty of discussion at more formal meetings with academic lawyers in legal institutes and in the course of presenting six different papers on the state of law in England.

If we try to understand their reasons for inflicting such a punishment we may get some broad picture of the state of Soviet Law.

In recent years the average length of prison sentence for crime has been substantially reduced in the Soviet Union. For example, the recently published *Fundamentals of Criminal Legislation* lays down that a prison sentence may not exceed ten years, except for especially dangerous or persistent offenders. For them the maximum is fifteen years. The thirty- and forty-year terms which we consider so barbarous have disappeared. Parallel with this change, actual conditions in prisons have been made slightly harsher, but in a strictly defined way. From the beginning of Soviet days the authorities aimed at making prison life as like as possible to normal civilian life. The criminal as a rule had not been living a normal civilian life; he would not have been working at his trade, not taking part in group activities and discussions—which for many years the Russians have regarded as a necessary part of ordinary life. The essential aim of Soviet penal treatment was to bring the ex-criminal into harmony with his neighbours, and particularly in these respects. This means that while in prison the prisoner worked at his normal job, which I believe he was entitled to demand as of right, at trade union rates and conditions, including holidays with pay. Was it not Harold Laski who met a house painter in a Soviet prison who had, while there, graduated at the local technical school to ‘mural painter, second class’, entitled to the assistance of two scaffolders and a colour mixer? He asserted the right to ornament the prison walls, and eventually worked in other prisons and founded a school of mural painters. How would this man fare under the new conditions? His opportunities would be the same, except that he would be paid ten per cent less than the trade union rate. The penal code aims at making prison life less attractive, but it defines precisely the changes to be made.

What is the reason for these changes in the attitude towards punishment? Soviet lawyers believe that there is an actual fall in the amount of crime in their country. The records show a fall in the number of convictions for major crimes; and a leading Soviet lawyer, Academician P. S. Romashkin, asserts boldly in his recent review of *The Fundamentals of Soviet Law* that ‘the number of crimes in the USSR is known to have fallen considerably’. He continues:

‘The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has now set before the courts, the Procurator’s Office (public prosecutor) and the militia, and also before the Soviet public and every citizen, the task of eradicating crime.’

It has been the universal experience in advanced countries that when a man has committed a serious crime and been sent to jail for a long term of imprisonment he remains a criminal for the rest of his life. This tendency of criminals

to revert to crime—recidivism—has been the nightmare of the penal reformer, and so far all attempts to reduce it in the western world have failed. This is what Soviet lawyers now claim they have done. If this is true it must be reckoned one of the greatest social achievements of mankind in the century. Just as an increase in the average expectation of life shows an improvement in the health of the individual, so a fall in the rate of recidivism shows an improvement in the general condition of a community. One might almost say that that community is at last becoming fit for ex-criminals to live in. What it really means is that the community is so united and so confident, living in such harmony, that it can welcome the wrongdoer back and re-establish him as a useful member of society.

If there is a fall in the amount of crime, one would expect it to be accompanied by a reduction in the number of courts, of judges, of police and of lawyers; and in fact it is so. If you visit a local court today, like as not you will find, as I did, that two courtrooms out of four in the building have not been used for months, and that the last judge who retired has not been replaced, so reducing the number. Such a local court, a People's Court, is a mixture of our County Court and High Court, dealing with civil claims between citizens, and Quarter Sessions and Assizes where the state prosecutes alleged criminals. (A visit to such a court is a story in itself, but this must wait for another day.) So also there is a reduction in the number of police—not because they cannot recruit them, but because they need fewer. They are supplemented at peak times by the voluntary militia. These too are entitled to a chapter on their own. Likewise we would expect the number of barristers to decrease. In fact there is a great increase in the number of lawyers being trained. They have no separate profession of advocacy, as we have barristers distinct from solicitors, but simply the trained lawyer. We find an increase in the number of law schools in universities and in other institutes of higher learning; there is a greater number of students in the law faculties, but a decrease in the number of practising lawyers. Fewer are needed for advising civilians in the consultation rooms, fewer for the courts, and more of their work in administration and the direction of large enterprises. Any substantial undertaking, whether industrial, commercial, administrative or government, is likely to have a lawyer on its staff. They are lawyers in the full sense that they have access to the courts to represent the enterprises which employ them; but they are not quite independent advocates as are those who advise and represent ordinary civilians.

If the aim of the Soviet state is gradually to do away with the law, the first requirement is that people should be law-abiding. The most law-abiding ought to be the lawyers; and an increase in their number is consistent with this aim. It is quite usual to find Soviet people, and especially lawyers, talking about doing away with the law, and they give many examples. They recall the resolution 'On the precise observance of laws' adopted on Lenin's initiative by the sixth Congress of Soviets in November 1918. You do not find people treating the law flippantly and thinking that there is no crime unless they are caught. It is not regarded as fussy or pedantic to go out of your way to find what are the rules on any subject so that you can conform. Ordinary people believe in being strict about the law; even car drivers are seen to obey traffic rules with punctilious care. Socialist legality means not only that authorities must abide by the law but that everyone must obey it. Strict legality on the part of authority simply means the application of our rule of law by which all men are equal before the law. The second part of the meaning is an idea which in our country receives lip service but is widely ignored in private behaviour—from evasions of tax and ignoring of traffic regulations at one extreme to the increasing number of more serious crimes at the other.

People who adopt the Soviet attitude to legality tend to demand a similar

respect for the laws from everyone. They would reject the view of many perfectly decent British citizens who say when reading of a successful bank robbery 'Good luck to them' (provided no one has been hurt in the process). The Soviet citizen is becoming intolerant of every violation of the law. This was the one intolerance that I found on my visit to the Soviet Union.

After this short review we may return to consider the death penalty for bad driving. The case I mentioned earlier was the first of its kind in Leningrad, and it was a bad one. The driver had been drinking heavily during the evening, and then was hired to take some sailors to their ship. He did this successfully, but on the way home ran off the road on to the pavement and knocked down and killed three pedestrians. It was as bad a case of manslaughter by driving while drunk as one could expect to find. In England the penalty would be at the most five years' imprisonment and life suspension from driving (you could in fact apply for the restoration of your licence after a year and every year thereafter). With us, the deaths and injuries on the roads are mounting rapidly, as this last Easter reminds us. Every western country shares this experience. The part played by alcohol is put in this way by Dr. L. G. Norman, chief medical officer of the London Transport Executive, speaking on April 17 at an international conference of forensic scientists in London :

'It may be that between twenty-five and thirty per cent of road traffic accidents are associated with the consumption of alcohol by road users.'

The Soviet people find one section of their life where crime tends to increase, in contrast to its decrease in all the others. They think that the harm suffered by the community is more important than the motive of the criminal; and they see the tragedy and misery of the road accident as a sort of affront, as quite out of keeping with the advances being made in their comfort and well-being. They will argue that there is a point when a man with a car should know that one more drink is too much. If motive and responsibility are to be considered, we must go back to that point. If we reply that the death penalty does not deter, they point out that our modern experience is only in countries where our very way of life presents constant inducements and provocations to crime, and that our experience relates only to murder; and that with murder it is possible that the strength of the motive and the complexity of the planning of the deed may suppress any sober reckoning of the consequences.

About Soviet traffic and driving I would only say that the weight of commercial traffic—lorries of all kinds—in big cities exceeds what we are accustomed to, although the number of private cars is still far lower. The standards of care and obedience to rule are higher than any I have seen. What happens after the accident is another story, and it shows that drivers and police have not yet worked out a simple technique for priorities and behaviour. I was frequently in cars and chanced to be present at two accidents at the same place—a black spot—and this experience was quite revealing. I formed the view that people are much concerned lest there should be an accident, and equally concerned about the consequences. Perhaps a detailed description of these two accidents, with the behaviour of the drivers, the police, the injured man, the witnesses and the onlookers, would be more helpful than rambling generalities about lawyers' opinions.

There are many things I have not touched upon which are perhaps more important to lawyers and students of the Soviet Union: the abolition of the Ministry of Justice, as one distinguished lawyer said, 'not necessarily or solely resulting from the changes after Stalin's death'; the question whether, as is claimed, the Soviet state is likely to replace all punishment by educational and curative measures; the sort of problems that come up for discussion at consultation chambers and in the courts; the role of the lawyer in explaining the possi-

bility that life may go on in the future without him; what is happening to Soviet state organisations—is there any crack in what many people have regarded as the unyielding and unchanging front of the Soviet state? If crime is beginning to disappear, and with it the courts and the judges, can this mean that the state itself is beginning to wilt a little, to shrink in upon itself?

These are problems of absorbing interest to lawyer and layman alike, both in the Soviet Union and throughout the world.

## **‘SOMETHING OUGHT TO BE DONE!’**

**Viktor Slavkin**

**T**HE first blow was struck by a fellow in a cap. Ginger replied. The fellow in the cap lashed out once more. Ginger punched him in the chest.

Folk did not pass by.

‘When will these drunken fights finally come to an end?’ remarked a girl in a short, full skirt, in disgust.

The chap in the cap punched Ginger in the earhole.

‘You’re right! It’s high time something was done about it’, a young man in a track suit chipped in decisively.

Ginger hit the fellow in the cap in the solar plexus.

‘They shouldn’t be fighting in the streets; they ought to go to a library!’ burst out a sandy-haired youngster carrying a heavy briefcase.

The lad in the cap punched Ginger in the teeth.

‘They ought to pour all the vodka into the sea and smash all the bottles; then there’d be an end to drinking’, said a woman carrying a handbag.

Ginger kicked out at his opponent.

‘No need to be so harsh. Every bottle costs twelve kopecks’, interjected a lad with a string bag in which he was carrying a football.

The lad in the cap knocked Ginger down.

‘They ought to be drawn into an amateur art group, playing the parts of drunkards and hooligans’, suggested a girl who looked like a cultural activities organiser.

Ginger grabbed at the hair of the chap in the cap.

‘They’d be disqualified for such methods in our club—and a good job!’ said a lad with a suitcase.

The fellow in the cap was banging Ginger’s head against the pavement.

‘Why do we just stand here? We ought to take their names and report them tomorrow at their work!’

The girl who looked like a cultural activities organiser was getting out her pencil, when suddenly . . .

. . . a sharp jet of water hit Ginger in the face, and then the chap wearing the cap. Surprise made them let go of each other. Wiping their dripping faces, they fled in opposite directions.

Meanwhile, a boy with a toy water pistol was crossing the road against the traffic, where crossing was prohibited.

‘When will they teach children to cross at the proper place?’ exclaimed the girl in the short, full skirt.

‘Something ought to be done about it!’ said someone . . .

—Yunost, 1962, No. 10.

# THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY

Hilda Hookham

'GRAND RAILWAY FROM LONDON TO CHINA', *Punch* suggested facetiously in 1842. Satirising the contemporary mania in England for opening railways (the mania today is for closing them), *Punch* suggested that the line should go from St. Paul's to Peking, by way of a tunnel through the centre of the earth. It was pointed out to prospective speculators in the trans-earth railway scheme that the track would be driven through soil with solid rocks of gold and silver and caverns of precious stones.

These fantasies have long become reality, but along the earth's surface. Since 1905 it has been possible to travel by rail from the Atlantic to the Pacific, a quarter of the earth's surface, by rail. From the Hook of Holland or Paris through trains go to Moscow; thence the Trans-Siberian leaves at twenty-past midnight for the longest rail journey on earth, to Vladivostok or Peking. For eight or nine days the trans-continental express is home for the traveller to the Far East.



RAILWAYS developed late in Russia, although not for lack of engineering talent: the serf Cherepanov, from a Ural copper smelting works, constructed a steam-engine in 1833. He was sent to England by the factory owners, and on his return designed and constructed a 'dry-land steamer', which was used to transport ore to the factory furnaces. The Tsar and his ministers regarded railways as harbingers of social upheaval; but a line was constructed, mainly for court convenience, over the twenty-mile stretch from St. Petersburg to Tsarskoye Selo, where there was an imperial summer palace. Foreign engineers were employed (French nationals were excepted, for the Tsar knew that the French, too, were harbingers of revolution). Engines were ordered from abroad: Nimble, Arrow, Knight, Elephant, Eagle and Lion. Between the engine tenders and the passenger wagons two trucks were loaded with sacks of sawdust, designed to provide soft landings for passengers pitched forward by an accident. This line was opened in 1838.

The Tsar's mistrust of railways was lessened when it was realised that they were excellent aids to the suppression of revolt. The speed with which the English government rushed troops to Liverpool *en route* to suppress Irish disorders was an example which commended itself to the Tsar. But further railway development in feudal Russia was slow. The rail link between St. Petersburg and Moscow was not completed until the early 'fifties, and up to 1885 the lines had not yet gone beyond the Urals.

The great trans-Ural territories known as Siberia had been opened up since the sixteenth century by Cossacks and freebooters, hardy pioneers and explorers. In 1580 the runaway Cossack Yermak crossed the Urals, and six years later the first Siberian town, Tiumen, was founded. Yeneseisk, Krasnoyarsk, Bratsk and Irkutsk were all founded in the first half of the seventeenth century. During the same period Russians reached the shores of the Pacific. The towns developed not only as trading centres, but as stage posts on the long road to exile trod by centuries of insurgents, people with liberal opinions, helpless serfs—followed by their womenfolk and children. In the nineteenth century the numbers of exiles swelled, and between 1825 and 1885 three-quarters of a million went to penal servitude or banishment. The number of colonists also rose steeply; in the 'sixties and 'seventies some 10,000 peasants, poverty-stricken and oppressed, annually left their homes in European Russia to settle in Siberia. Until the coming of the railway the convoys of exiles and their families went stage by stage along the Siberian trunk road, walking two days, resting one, journey-



ing on the rivers encaged in prison barges. The colonists followed the same route, with carts and animals when they had them.

Siberia cried out for people to develop her vast resources, and from the middle of the nineteenth century military, commercial and foreign industrial interests demanded the opening of a Siberian railway line. Many projects were put forward, including one from an Englishman, Dull by name, who proposed a horse-drawn tramway from Nizhni-Novgorod to the Pacific. The project was rather less fantastic than it seems in a sub-continent whose fuel resources were undeveloped but which abounded in sturdy horses.

Towards the end of the century the Tsar's imperialist adventures in the Far East brought the question to the forefront. Japan was the immediate antagonist to Tsarist eastern ambitions to develop as a Pacific power with ice-free ports, and the main areas of conflict were Korea and the Manchurian region of China. Strategic considerations were uppermost; and court speculations in gold and silver mines, in Korean timber concessions, and so on, were supporting considerations. So the decision was taken, and the construction of the Siberian railway began in 1891. The first sod at the Far Eastern end of the line at Vladivostok was dug by the Tsarevich, the last of the Romanovs, on his return home from a world tour via Japan (where an attempt had been made on his life). The route chosen followed the old Moscow-Siberian highway, north of one which would have best served Siberia's economic development. Taking advantage of the weakness of imperial China, a concession was secured from the Manchu rulers for the construction of a direct route from Zabaikal to Vladivostok through Manchuria—the Chinese Eastern Railway. This helped precipitate the Russo-Japanese war. The last link of the trans-Siberian line, the Baikal circuit, was not completed until after the outbreak of the war in 1905. In spite of the railway, the defeat of the Tsar's army and fleet was brought about largely through the inadequacy of communications.

The estimates for the building of the trunk line amounted to 350,000,000 gold roubles; in fact, more than twice this was spent—the total may indeed have exceeded 1,000,000,000 gold roubles. Graft was the order of the day, with money pouring into the pockets of statesmen, officials and contractors. Considerable as was the achievement for the times, the construction was bedevilled by swindlers and racketeers. The railway was a single track, and too light; capacity was slight; and trains were derailed. Within a few years many sections of the track had to be relaid. Some notable iron bridges were built across the Irtysh, Ob and Yenesei rivers, but the smaller bridges were wooden structures which could not support the weights. Having lost the monopoly of the section through Manchuria after the Russo-Japanese war, the Tsarist government began to build a line between Zabaikal and Vladivostock, on its own territory. This line came into use only at the beginning of World War I.



**T**ODAY the Trans-Siberian Railway is a double-track complex of railways, electrified for the 3,400 miles from Moscow to Baikal. For a quarter of this stretch the line runs on alternating current, more economical than direct current. The railway is the main artery of a lusty young country beginning to flex its muscles. Some of the cities along the route owe their existence to the railway; such, for example, as Novosibirsk, founded in 1893 and now the first city of Siberia, with a population of nearly 900,000. It is the centre of an immense industrial and grain-producing region, and the hub of important transport systems.

The fantasies of *Punch* of untold treasure turn out to be an understatement. Leather and meat, butter and gold, grain and timber, fur and fish, as well as precious minerals and stones, are now being unlocked from the Siberian treasure

chest. Above all, there are unlimited resources of fuel and energy. In the Kansk-Achinsk basin alone a 100-metre-thick coal seam could be brought immediately to an annual production of 130,000,000 tons by open-cast mining. The rivers and Lake Baikal are also sources of boundless power. Baikal, the deepest lake in the world, contains more water than the Baltic Sea. Hundreds of rivers flow into it; the great Angara alone flows from it. If the outflow of the rapid Angara were left undisturbed and the feed water to the lake were stopped it would take four centuries to empty it. The question before the Soviet people is not lack of resources: it is which are the most economic, most expedient, to exploit first. It is no accident that the development of Siberia features so largely in the current seven-year plan.

A series of power stations are rising on the Angara which will produce the cheapest electricity in the USSR. The first dam has been completed, and a new lake formed. The level of Baikal has risen several feet, and the original line with its numerous tunnels has already been replaced by a rerouted electrified track.

Krasnoyarsk was one of the old Siberian cities on the Yenesei. It is a city with strong revolutionary traditions, great industries, and suburbs stretching thirty kilometres along the river bank. The Yenesei, one of the five greatest rivers in the world, has just been dammed and ten 500,000-kilowatt generators will be installed to make the world's largest power station.

A slim bright guide to the Trans-Siberian Railway has recently been published by the State Publishing House for Geographical Literature in Moscow. Fully illustrated, with maps at every stage, the guide gives a panorama of the USSR from Moscow to Vladivostock. It is a guide to one of the most impressive rail journeys on earth. It is a guide to Siberia, the land of the future.

## **TWENTIETH-CENTURY CAPITALISM**

**E. Varga**

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# TWELFTH FORM HOUSE

Reportage by Ilya Auerbach

## Fact One. Siverskaya Village and its Inhabitants

**S**IVERSKAYA is a railway station and village, one of those summer *dacha* villages that usually spring up in the vicinity of any big town. The local people let rooms to summer holidaymakers, or work in Leningrad and its suburbs.

Collective farms border on it from all four directions; but there is scarcely a leading farm among them. Part of the indigenous population of Siverskaya regard themselves as 100 per cent city people, and have very little knowledge of collective farm affairs.

But the locality, as they used to write in the old times, is full of the various beauties of nature. And that is all there is about Siverskaya.

## Fact Two. September 1, 1961

**S**EPTEMBER 1, 1961, was the date of the outbreak of ten family rows. Such rows are fairly common, and consist in the son or daughter doing something quite different from what the family thinks he or she should do.

On September 1 ten school-leavers from Siverskaya No. 1 11-year school started work in the calf house of the Lenin Collective Farm.

'There goes the twelfth form', someone said of the girls, and somehow that name stuck.

Their families were startled, though there was really nothing surprising in the girls' action. Their decision to go to work on the collective farm as a group after they left school was a longstanding and firm one, and the girls in question were not the kind to change their minds depending on the weather, their mood or other circumstances.

They live in a small house on the fringe of Bolshevo village. They work close by, on the cattle farm. The house they live in is now called 'Twelfth Form House'.

## Fact Three. The House on the Outskirts

**Y**OU see this house, painted pale green, straight away if you take the shortest road from Siverskaya to the collective farm. There is a broad green field, a narrow gauge railway, and the house. When I paid my first visit the only person in the house was Auntie Nyusha, who keeps house for the girls and contrives to feed them on twenty roubles per head a month. Muttering about the morning disorder in the place, Auntie Nyusha allowed me into the room that serves the girls as dining room, lounge and ballroom. It is four paces long and two paces wide.

Once there I resorted to fairly familiar methods and tried to get an idea of the mistresses of the room from its furnishings and objects; but nothing, or hardly anything, came of it.

A television set filled the Red Corner. On the table were an enormous abacus, scissors, a lilac ribbon, a rather ingenious manicure set in the shape of a chicken, and a swaying doll. Two book-shelves completed the furniture. I won't deny that on seeing the books I recalled another hackneyed saying: "Tell me what you read and I'll tell you what you are". But even this proved flimsy, because never in my life had I seen such a mixture of books. A volume by Alexei Tolstoy

stood alongside *The Basic Principles of Livestock Breeding*; the red binding of a book by Mayakovsky stood out sharply against the rich yellow cover of *Dairy Farming in the USA*; and the pale-blue dust-jacket of Yesenin contrasted with the severity of *Problems in Higher Mathematics*.

A stern notice over the door immediately caught my attention:

NO GRUMBLING      NO WHINING

ORDER TO BE MAINTAINED

Clear ?

Very well, then . . .

Pinned to the door was a sheet of ruled paper, like a football championship table. But on this sheet where the names of the teams would be there were surnames. Opposite each name was a shaded square. 'Timetable of household duties' was the title of the sheet. The names were in alphabetical order, just as the girls would have had their names called in class: Vladimirova, Yegorova, Zamorina, Zakharova, Kondakova, Kravtsova, Razumova, Rassadina, Trunova, and Churina.

That is how it should be, obviously. After all, they are the 'twelfth form'. This, it seems, is necessary, for they are very fond of their school and remember it very well. And that is quite right, obviously, for their school is—but that's something for later.

Meanwhile a few words about what they are now doing.

#### Fact Four. $15 \times 136 = \text{Two Thousand Odd}$

ONE hundred and thirty-six—that is the number of cows the 'twelfth formers' have charge of. One hundred and thirty-six rather sickly animals, each of which is paying for many years of lack of care by an inconceivably small yield of milk.

Fifteen—that is the weight in kilograms of silage required each day for each cow, regardless of its personal qualities. By multiplying the figures you can discover what takes up part of the girls' workday, probably the most difficult part too, for the rest of the time goes in cleaning up the cowshed, milking, and so on—that is to say, in work that does not require such toughness as the shifting of these 2,000-odd kilograms.

All the girls are studying at institutes. And they also carry out social work in the village.

Like the collective farm in which they work, the cattle farm is not a model one. It lacks much that would make work easier and which is quite feasible even on their collective farm. It has no overhead conveyor, for example, which is absolutely essential for carrying fodder to the cattle. Nor has it got a great many other things. That is why all the work falls on the shoulders of the girls.

In the evenings they seat themselves sedately around the table. Sitting there in their sweaters and slacks, with their thin, weak arms on the table, they look

like ordinary town girls, and I thought of the first days of their life on the collective farm, when it seemed to them that they would not be able to stand up to this difficult work; when they longed to have a cry and to sleep and sleep; when their backs ached so much they could not straighten up, and the collective farm was slow in building their house, and they could only sleep on their backs for fear of awakening the others, and they were all of them tired to death.

It is difficult to credit this now, with the room so quiet, the only sound the click of the abacus beads under Valya Kondakova's hand and the ticking of several alarm clocks. It is very difficult to credit this, looking at the delicate, no, dainty, beauty of Galya Zamorina's face as she turns the pages of bright German magazines, or at the fair head of Sveta Churina, bent over her exercise book—in a word, looking at these completely urban girls who have not the slightest resemblance to what some townsfolk with their wretched imaginations picture as milkmaids.

They themselves dislike talking about the past, with the exception, of course, of anything concerning their school. And they are quite put out if anyone proposes writing about them.

'What is there to write about us?' they say, 'Just wait a bit until we get the cattle farm among the most advanced ones, then you can write as much as you like.'

And they say this without affectation, without false modesty or posing.

'Do you find it difficult?'

'No, it's not too bad. It was tough at first; now we've got used to it.'

'And how's the life generally?'

They laugh and shrug their shoulders. 'It's a good life.'

'How are you off for things? Do you have enough?'

They laugh and shrug their shoulders. 'Not really, frankly speaking. But we don't expect very much yet.' That was Sveta Churina, speaking determinedly and so curtly that there was nothing to add to what she had said. 'When we pull the cattle farm up—well, then we'll live well. Then we'll demand things from the collective farm.'

'And will you pull it up?'

They all murmur. 'If we have to drag it up by the ears we'll pull it up.'

They will do it. There cannot be the slightest doubt about it. Written down in a thin school exercise book are eighteen points, the plan for the 'general pulling up' of the farm. Eighteen points, the result of more than six months' observations, thought and consideration. Point number one on this list is an overhead conveyor, a very simple and inexpensive construction which the collective farm somehow does not seem to manage to acquire, though 2,000-odd kilograms of silage have to pass daily through these ten pairs of hands. And not one of the girls complains—that is the crux of it. They are fighting.

#### **Fact Five. Lara Trunova's Doubts and Hopes**

**L**ET me say at the beginning that Lara Trunova, about whom I am writing, holds no exceptional position among the girls. I am only describing my talk with her because it is something that any one of the girls could have said, for Lara's hopes are their common hopes, and her doubts the doubts of all of them.

Valya Kondakova said this about her: 'Lara is the most interesting of all of us.' Irina Ottovna Snakenburg, head of teaching at Siverskaya School No. 1, spoke in a rather intriguing way about Lara: 'She is a humanist in the full sense of the word. A person without discounts.' Ivan Solovyov, director of the school, of whom more later, described Lara rather differently: 'It's always extremes with her. She either idealises people or else sees cold calculation in everyone and doesn't believe a thing.'

None of these descriptions seemed to match very well with Lara's appearance when I found her in the corridor of the department of literature at the teachers' training college, where she had been sitting her winter exams. Lara turned out to be a fair-haired girl, or rather teenager, whose eyes expressed complete ingenuity one minute, and then infinite irony. She had a rapid manner of speech, carried away by her subject and desperately trying to master her r's, which she found very difficult to pronounce.

I had not chosen the most opportune moment to meet her: Lara was taking her psychology exam and had drawn an unlucky question which in itself was sufficient to spoil anyone's spirits. Nevertheless, she passed, though not as well as she would have liked. We had a conversation that somehow started with Lara, while answering some question I had asked, admitting out of the blue that she disliked cows. And this is what she said in answer to my natural astonishment:

'Don't be surprised at that. There's nothing to be surprised at. Many of the others would tell you the same if they were only honest about it. The main thing is to understand what is most important today. Not even that. Nearly everyone does understand, but not everyone does what is most important. At first, we, too, intended to go out to some construction job. To Siberia. And then we thought it over. We can see things in Siberia, but we don't see the things going on under our very noses. Everyone wants to go out to the construction jobs. Everyone is looking for romance. But the thing to understand is what romance is. Perhaps it lies right under our noses, only it looks unromantic. It's not the time at present to argue specially for what you exactly want.

'Never mind, for instance, what I may want. The main thing is the need on a general scale. The rest depends on the person, on the degree of his honesty. Six of us, for example, have diplomas as class III chauffeurs. But what would happen if we all came as drivers? There'd be more than enough drivers, but these wretched cows would continue to give low milk yields. What is wanted is for all of us to do what's most needed at the given time, even though it means carting manure, if that's the decisive job. Do you understand? But sometimes this is what I'm afraid of—maybe it's only us who are such fools as to argue this way. . . . After all, people often lie, and they don't themselves understand why they lie. When we first thought of joining the collective farm, the chairman promised us three bags full—but how many of his promises has he kept? Why tell lies? He only needed to say honestly: "Let's put it like this, girls—a house, let's say: we'll build it for you for the end of the year, but not before; as for pay, well, please excuse me. . . ." Now the class that followed us is having doubts whether to join or not to join, for they, too, were thinking about it.

'Or take this. We had a YCL official come down to us, from the district—such a young chap that we were straight away on familiar terms with him. But it was such an unlucky day. Galya Zamorina was taken ill, and left a note: her cow was to be milked and the calf watered. Nina Zakharova was having a calf (that's how our girls talk), and she was almost out of her wits—after all, it was her first. The TV set was out of order too. Well, the visitor let himself go. He hadn't really got the hang of things, but he lashed out: "Lazybones, loafers—you can't even fix the TV". He left and rang everyone up, saying: "They'll soon give up and run off". But where would we run off to? And right through the district spread the rumour—"They'll run off".

'Well, he came out to us a second time. He brought a book with him—*How the Steel was Tempered*. He got us all together and started reading out aloud to us. We could hardly sit still for laughing—he was carrying out educational work. Well, we soon put his brains to rights. We've even become good friends now—he's not such a bad chap after all. But it would have been better if he'd



come out on the job with us right at the start instead of pulling out the book. At school all our teachers worked on the allotments and in the workshops, but that one. . . . No, we wouldn't have had one like him at our school.'

### Fact Six. The Benefit of Self-government

**I**T'S not only Lara who talks about the school. They all do. Almost every minute they are saying: 'But in our school'; 'Things are quite different in our school'; 'We didn't do things that way at school'.

What kind of school is it, then, this Siverskaya No. 1?

Going over to Siverskaya I discovered what would seem to be a most ordinary school: a big white building, with some fifteen acres of grounds. As in thousands of other schools, there was ringing of bells, and desperate shoving and shouting as the schoolchildren pushed through the open doors at break time. It was only a little later that I understood what made this school different from others, what gave it the distinctiveness you would sense if you were to visit it.

An atmosphere of work reigns in the school. Everyone is working, and not just in the classrooms and laboratories. Even the first-year pupils—they also start their school life with something besides straight strokes in exercise books. At first they watch how the senior pupils work on the allotments, and later, when the philosophical question has formed in the youngster's mind—'When will I be big enough?'—he is given a responsible job: planting a carrot with his own hands. That is how a man's working life begins.

And after the second year there is a fortnight's practical work, and it is no joke either; it is real practical work, and not some kind of game. So year by year the children climb the rungs of their ladder of work, and the rungs become higher and higher, more and more interesting and important.

You would be mistaken, however, if you thought that the pupils of Siverskaya School do nothing but work and study. All aptitudes are encouraged and developed, all desires and intentions. The only thing is that no one insists that you do this or that. If you want to take up music, let us say, well, go ahead. But then working on the allotment ruins your hands, doesn't it? And for that reason the musicians, as they are called, are excused vegetable growing and take up driving instead.

The simple truth is that, in general, time can be found for everything, given the desire; and the children at the school have the desire and manage it. The school has two lorries of its own, purchased from the income from the school allotment. In these lorries the children travel all over the country during the summer. The eighth form, for example, goes to the localities linked with Pushkin, the school-leavers go to the Crimea, and so on.

Here we should say a few words about self-government. The top forms have no form teachers. The forms are run by elected persons. And neither discipline nor school work suffers from it.

Independence, the absence of petty and irksome tutelage—that is the second law by which this school lives (second after work, of course). The girls we have met wanted to go to the Ukraine one summer, so they went. They spent the summer working in the Kiev Region.

On the desk of the school director, Ivan Matveyevich Solovyov, I saw a sheet of paper with a bold heading: 'REPORT'. The contents of this document were quite unlike its ordinary office form. This is what it said:

*'Meshcheryakova Valya, Denisova Zhenya, Kosygina Raya and Nikolayeva Galya worked on the cattle farm on February 10. The girls were a great help to us and worked enthusiastically.'*

*'They performed various jobs: distributed fodder, milked the cows, watered the calves, and so on.*

*'Thanks a lot for your help. Well done, girls!'*

10.2.62.

*The Twelfth Form, Bolshevo.'*

You may rest assured that no one brought any pressure to bear on Meshcheryakova Valya, Denisova Zhenya or the others, let alone compelled them to work on the farm helping the school graduates. After all, they have got self-government.

#### **Fact Seven. Interview with the School Director**

**M**Y interview with Ivan Solovyov was rather peculiar. He kept sending me off to other teachers, assuring me that it was they who had made the school what it was. There was some truth in this, but I knew Ivan Solovyov himself had been one of the pioneers of the revolution we now call polytechnicalisation, that he was one of the first in the country to transform the concept of labour education into self-education, that it was on his initiative and in his school that the eleventh form was first introduced. And I was told a great deal more by people who had known him well for a long time.

Only once, I think, did we have a real talk, and then, it is true, I not so much questioned as listened. It started with a question about the position in agriculture.

And this is what Ivan Solovyov said:

'The situation is very far from simple—you can't escape it, nor can it be overlooked, as was once the case. There are many blunders, and there's no one remedy for them. There's no such panacea. But as for our teaching work, there are some—I wouldn't call them recipes—some considerations. . . . Speaking generally, let us take this interesting though very regrettable fact. How many children of collective farmers from our own Leningrad Region in your opinion are studying in Leningrad institutes? What do you think? Unfortunately, very few. Especially as compared with the children of town folk. But the bitterest thing is that those who finish their studies do not, as a rule, return home; they either settle in the towns or else go off to other districts. So what we have is this, that there is no one to give real direction in the localities. But who other than the intelligentsia, the new rural intelligentsia, should be the creative centre, so to speak, of collective farm life? You know, for example, that here in Leningrad Region there are districts where there is a shortage of teachers. But in Leningrad itself there is a surplus. And even among those who do teach in rural schools there are plenty who don't know about agriculture and don't like it. Where would they have learned? And how can they like it if they don't know? There are no textbooks for that.'

Just then a group of schoolgirls burst in to see Ivan Solovyov about some urgent matter.

I thought about the 'twelfth-form' girls. What they are doing today and what they are preparing themselves for in the future seemed to tie up remarkably closely with what Ivan Solovyov had just said. The 'twelfth-formers' saw themselves as the rural teachers of tomorrow. And so as to become real rural teachers they did not want to learn about the life of the village just from textbooks.

#### **Fact Eight. The House Once Again**

**T**WICE a week Galya Zamorina hurries back to her old school, three kilometres there and three back. Apparently she knows German quite well, since, as a first-year correspondence student at the teachers' training college, she has been put in charge of junior forms and is teaching them German.

*(continued on page 25)*

# Moscow Newsletter

## THE SHOSTAKOVICH THIRTEENTH

Robert Daglish

IT is perhaps not surprising that Shostakovich's latest symphony was treated with such caution at first by the Soviet press. Its opening movement is based on Yevtushenko's *Baby Yar*, which has been the subject of keen and at times bitter debate in Party circles and the newspapers.

Uppermost in the minds of the poem's critics is the thought that this passionate and moving protest against anti-Semitism wherever it appears may be used abroad by hostile journalists and publishers to give an impression of widespread anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. They need not look far in the western press to confirm their anxiety. Even the recent Penguin translation of Yevtushenko is far from innocent.

'Yevgeny Yevtushenko is the fearless spokesman of his generation in Russia', says the cover notice. 'In verse that is young, fresh and outspoken he frets at restraint and injustice, as in his now famous protest over the Jewish pogrom at Kiev.'

Some people might excuse this as mere carelessness on the part of the Penguin blurb writer, but a closer glance at the translation only increases one's doubts.

The lines

'O, my Russian people, I know you,  
Your nature is international.  
Foul hands rattle your clean name.  
I know the goodness of my country.  
How horrible it is that pompous title  
the anti-Semites calmly call themselves,  
Society of the Russian Race.'

have been shifted by the translators from where Yevtushenko put them *immediately after* the description of a pre-revolutionary pogrom in the tsarist empire to a new position near the end of the poem, making it appear that they refer to the massacre at Baby Yar. What is more, the past tense used in Russian (*chasto bryatsali*) is quite arbitrarily changed to the present ('foul hands rattle'). Yet Peter Levi claims in his introduction that he had 'tried to keep as close as possible to the original sequence of ideas'. What dictated the change in this case? It looks very much as if the translators were not unwilling to let people who had never heard of Baby Yar believe that this Nazi massacre was perpetrated by the Russians.

The two lines which Yevtushenko has now added at the beginning of his poem (and which were included in the third performance of the symphony of February 10),

'I stand at the brink,  
Russians, Ukrainians died here too,'

are justified when the poet is faced with this kind of subtle distortion.

It would be the greatest of pities, however, if considerations of the cold war were allowed in any way to mar appreciation of the magnificent new work by Shostakovich that this poem has inspired.

Shostakovich, as he said recently, has always been interested in moral and ethical growth, and he finds a perfect subject in the Yevtushenko of these poems,

so scrupulous in his judgment, so determined to root out any kind of complacency that he speaks sometimes with more fury of the crimes committed by his own people half a century ago than of those committed against Russia in recent memory. His work is that of a man who not merely says, but believes. It is marvellously enriched by the music.

Shostakovich has blended *Baby Yar* and four other poems by Yevtushenko into a symphony for chorus and orchestra of extraordinary power and subtlety. The orchestration of the first movement is monumentally simple, but the spell works just the same, and the great Russian basses, which remind one instantly of Varlaam and Boris Godunov, now singing in defence of Jewry, acquire a new power from the newness of their theme.

In the second movement, *Humour*, you have Shostakovich in a familiar mood, full of dazzling invention and satire. The ponderous rhythms of the tyrants lumber in vain pursuit of Humour. The flutes shrill his derision, the trombones give a mocking cackle from somewhere deep underground. A violin solo in minor key leers and laughs like Humour's head when it is severed and impaled on a guardsman's pike, but, as in the poem, 'as soon as the jesters' pipes begin to play, there is Humour dancing down the way'.

In the singularly expressive *In a Shop* of the third movement the mood changes abruptly again to sombre reflection. Though still retaining every word of the poetry, the music has greater play than in the first movement. Coming forward after accompanying the soloist as each stanza is sung, the orchestra develops the original theme to its climax. One sees, just as the poet has seen, the housewives standing in the queue, and one feels the mounting intensity of the long hard look he takes at the still arduous realities of a working woman's life to the point when the soloist burst out 'to cheat is shameful, to give short weight is a sin'. And in the diminuendo that follows one shares the new vision of the poet as he stares with humility at those 'hands tired of the shopping-bag's pull that speak to us of righteousness'. There are many different ways of reading Yevtushenko's poems. Shostakovich's skill in supplying just the right 'reading', the perfect dynamics, lends them a new permanence.

The tragic themes of the symphony reach their highest culmination in the fourth movement, *Fears*:

'Fears are dying in Russia  
Like phantoms of years past . . .'

Later a desperate marching rhythm reminds us:

'We charged fearless in attack,  
But we feared our own thoughts. . . .'

The death of such terror is a slow death, and the creeping phantoms are with us right up to the finale; but what a superb finale it is.

I wrote some time ago for this journal that the poem *Career* did offer the poet's critics a rather convenient stick to beat him with. In places it is self-confident to the point of brashness, and nothing is more vulnerable than the cockiness of a young poet implying a comparison between himself, Galileo, Tolstoy, and so on.

'He knew well the Earth must spin,  
But he had to think of kith and kin.'

Shostakovich, the mature artist, with a sympathetic insight some critic might well envy, has lifted this poem to the heights. The cockiness is still there, popping up now and then on the bassoon, but the main theme ('I shall make my career by not making it'), which had seemed to me rather a flashy paradox, becomes in Shostakovich's interpretation the song of a man who has come through, reminding one as much of Lawrence as of Yevtushenko.

Delicately figured on the strings, then again and again in flute and *pizzicato* variations, it seems to be taking all kinds of things into consideration. In a

tentative, not quite certain tranquillity, after a night of cathartic testing and questioning, it seems to strike the truth that lies between believing and blind faith, between discipline and integrity, the solution to questions that the Party has not been afraid to raise by exposing the Stalin cult, and that every thinking young Russian must now face up to and answer for himself because true service to the community depends on his answer.



ANY people in the West who have been taking a new interest in Soviet writing over the past few years, and particularly in the Soviet Union's young poets, will be surprised, and perhaps disappointed, over the results of the March ideological discussions and the Writers' Plenum. It seems to me that there are grounds for disappointment, but it is worth looking at the situation more than once to find out to what extent they are justified.

My own disappointment arises not so much from the fact that Yevtushenko and Voznessensky have been criticised, but that they should have laid themselves so wide open to criticism. Their very great popularity in this country and their ability to arouse a similar enthusiasm abroad had made one accustomed to thinking of them as a new force in the minds of the young generation. As poets, of course, they are very different. Voznessensky is more complex, more subtle with words, his charm lies in his originality, in the feeling he gives one of seeing things from a new and unusual angle. Yevtushenko, on the other hand, has the ability to give a simple poetic form to the thoughts and feelings of a great many people about contemporary problems. It was this 'civic' quality in his verse that attracted Shostakovich.

While they both stuck to writing poetry they were on safe ground, for they were working in a medium they knew as well as anyone else; but over the past year, and particularly in their travels abroad, they have frequently been pressed (quite naturally so) into prose explanations of their attitude to art and off-the-cuff comments on all manner of subjects. We all know that in Britain Yevtushenko managed this extremely well and made a great many new friends for Soviet literature by being natural, uninhibited and responsive to his audience, but one has only to read his *Autobiography* as published in *L'Express* to see how far the journalistic spree can take one away from art and truth.

In *Komsomolskaya Pravda* the other day a trio of critics compared Yevtushenko with Gogol's Khlestakov and discovered all sorts of departures from Leninist teaching in what he had written and said abroad, which is fair enough if one takes Yevtushenko's claim to be a revolutionary seriously. My own reaction had been that I could not remember reading any other Russian autobiography of which I believed so little. It was simply too boastful to be true.

Criticism of Voznessensky and also of the novelist Aksyonov has not been for any personal lapse of this kind. In a thoughtful article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* the critic Rurikov sums it up as a failure to appreciate what he calls the 'continuity of the Leninist generations'. When Voznessensky was asked by a Polish journalist whether he regarded his own generation as the 'fourth' generation of the revolution, he replied with humour that most generations considered themselves the first, but he went on to imply that he discounted the 'second' and 'third' generations altogether. 'In the political sense we are the children of the twentieth and twenty-second Congresses, the generation neighbouring on the revolutionary twenties, the traditions of Leninism. . . . According to the laws of genetics certain inherited characteristics may skip a generation. It is no accident therefore that we are so close to the generation of Lenin, the civil war and the twenties.'

Rurikov quotes Aksyonov as saying something similar and protests very



bitterly against the attempt to leave out of the picture the generations that built the Dnieper dam and Komsomolsk, and flew over the Pole. The age in which the foundations of socialism were laid, he insists, cannot be called non-revolutionary. Other writers have taken Aksyonov to task for 'creating' a problem between fathers and sons. Rurikov does not do this; he allows that such a problem can exist, but he is against exaggerating it into a complete failure of communication. Loss of a sense of the continuity of the revolution, of what has already been achieved, would, he fears, deprive young writers of one of the things that enable them to write well of the present. In a post-Plenum article for *Pravda* Aksyonov showed, without undignified recanting, that he appreciated this danger.

While accepting Rurikov's criticism of these younger writers' political ideas (he was not discussing their poetry), I cannot feel happy about the erratic shooting of some of their other critics. Mikhalkov's advice to Yevtushenko, for instance, that he should act abroad 'in such a way that you are not asked such questions' (Yevtushenko had been asked in West Germany if he thought Christ was a communist) is at best slightly impractical and at worst an invitation to other young writers to adopt a haughty, uncommunicative attitude. Korneichuk and Sobolev have talked emotionally in the same vein.

It would be a thousand pities for cultural relations if all the good work Yevtushenko did for closer understanding between the intellectuals of different countries were undone by this reaction to the one (admittedly gross) error of sending a careless piece of writing to a bourgeois journal.

Much of the trouble Voznessensky and Aksyonov have run into arises from their understandable determination to avoid the literary cliché and the stereotyped devices of art. If they have not yet succeeded in saying right things in their new way they may well succeed tomorrow. This is probably what Voznessensky meant when he said he was not going to excuse himself, he was just going to 'work and work'. In the cinema world, too, I am sure it was the cliché rather than a desire to deepen the 'father-and-son' conflict that Viktor Nekrassov had in mind when he praised the film *Ilyich's Gate* and thanked the producers for not bringing on the screen an old man 'with greying whiskers and a clear straightforward answer to everything'. Nekrassov went on: 'Had he appeared with his instructive advice the whole picture would have been ruined.'

A large section of the Soviet public are very quick to take offence at anything that smacks of contempt for the workers. But surely the critic who hits out at a stereotyped image that has lost its force does more for the workers than the painter of the sentimental but more familiar picture. One of the most satisfying moments in Rozov's excellent new play *Before Supper* is a tremendously moving speech by a red-faced, baldheaded, middle-aged man, every inch the bureaucrat in appearance, appealing to a relative of his not to slip back into old bad ways. A more conventional type of stage Party worker would never have put it across.

Another writer who shows a steady determination to avoid the literary cliché and achieves a remarkable power of expression by doing so is Voinovich in his story *I Want to be Honest* (*Novy Mir* No. 2, 1963). It was criticised yesterday in *Izvestia* by an engineer who did not like the picture Voinovich drew of a building-site foreman's struggle against the corrupting temptations to adopt slipshod work that seem to crowd in on him from every side. Admittedly the foreman does see things stark naked. He does not resent the intervention of the young Komsomol worker who ultimately jogs him into taking the right decision, but we are not made to see the Komsomol boy as a shining light. In fact Voinovich deliberately withdraws our sympathies from this snappish young man who knows so little of the foreman's problem. We see him only through the prism of the foreman's harassed honesty. But even this small, apparently unsympathetic reference is enough, in my view, to show one, on reflection, how the Party's



influence does come through in a real-life situation. The important thing is that one really believes it. Markov complained recently that the Komsomol was not described romantically in literature. That is a fair request to the writer who can do it. I should say it was an open question whether romanticism or cool realism is more acceptable to Soviet readers at present, but there can be no doubt that it is for each individual artist to decide which he can do best.

It would be wrong to assume from what I have been writing here that the fate of Soviet literature hinges on the work of one or two poets or prose-writers. The number of new names in Soviet writing today is large. It includes men like Lipatov from Siberia, Bykov of Byelorussia, Gladilin in Moscow, Fomenko on the Don. Poets are so numerous that any list would suffer from omissions. Tendryakov and Granin are highly significant figures both as writers and as the authors of excellent realistic filmscripts. In the theatre Viktor Rozov and Volodin have a great deal to say about present-day life. Most of these writers have clearly formed artistic personalities, they are deeply interested in the problems that the development of Soviet life presents, and they do not write to order. Nor do they write for a public that will accept ready-made solutions. It is on this public, which takes literature very seriously, that the fate of a writer now ultimately depends. I have not noticed any great change in the mood of readers in recent weeks. They all want to read more Aksyonov, more Voznesensky and, of course, the rest of Ehrenburg's memoirs.

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## TWELFTH FORM HOUSE

*(continued from page 20)*

She does it in intervals between feeding the cows, milking them, and caring for the calves. But she does it. And deep in their hearts the other girls envy her. Because for the rest of them teaching is still for the future, but Galya is already a teacher.

I discovered that they do not just want to teach children. They also want to be always together. That is why they dreamt of setting up 'their own school' in the future. Perhaps in Bolshevo itself. The ten of them will provide nearly all the teachers needed for the school. Lara Trunova will teach Russian language and literature, Valya Kondokova and Tamara Kravtsova physics and mathematics, Sveta Churina will take chemistry, Clara Vladimirova geography, and Galya Zamorina, of course, German; the other four will be biology teachers.

The school itself, the school of their future, stands on the outskirts of Bolshevo; at first sight it does not even dawn on one that it is a school. Just an ordinary two-story country building, brown, rather shabby-looking. I saw it on the very first day of my visit, when I lost my way, took the wrong road to 'Twelfth Form House', and found myself at the village school, thinking it was the house I was looking for. When I discovered my mistake I was rather upset, but later I realised that in fact I had not made a mistake. It was really to that building that I should have gone, the future 'Twelfth Form House'.

But of course that is not what it will be like. By then the peeling walls will be replaced by concrete surfaces with wide expanses of glass. And the building will not be surrounded by a wilderness, as now, but by a garden. And the ten young teachers will go up the steps in single file to take their first lesson. One of them, I do not know which one, will be the first to look towards the squat structures of the cattle farm, that same farm where on just such a September morning ten girls in ski-jackets were introduced to automatic milking machines. And they will glance at one another and, probably, feel a little self-important, as one would expect from very young teachers. And, one after the other, they will go in through the wide-open doors of their own school.

—Yunost. 1962. No. 7

## LESSONS FROM LITERATURE

Sergei Eisenstein

For some time before 1939 Eisenstein worked on a book to be called 'Pushkin and Cinema'. During a visit to Uzbekistan in that year, in preparing to film 'Ferghana Canal', he drafted the foreword to his Pushkin book. This rough draft manuscript, with only indications of the quotations he wished to include, was published in 'Iskusstvo kino' No. 4, 1955. This translation by Jay Leyda was made for the collection of Eisenstein's writings, 'Film Essays', that Dennis Dobson will publish this autumn.

*The heritage of all mankind is ours to master and apply.—Lenin.*

IT is our responsibility to put into practice Lenin's great directive on the cultural heritage. We must learn how to do it—far too many of us do not know. In our profession it is especially complicated, for the cinema has no *direct* ancestors.

To write 'in imitation of Tolstoy' or 'in imitation of Hemingway' is—comparatively—easy. Nor is this as silly as it may sound. For everything begins with imitation. We know instances of writers transcribing entire master-works. This is not a naïve undertaking. This is a way of finding the *movement* of another or classical writer, and to learn through this the ideas and feelings that are embedded in this or that system of visual and aural images, in his word-combinations, and so forth.

In ascending to the factors that emerge from movement—from this primary gesture of the writer—there is, on the one hand, complexity, for it is always easier to 'skin' than to learn. On the other hand there is the possibility to treat literature not only directly, as by literary heirs, but in the interests of its *indirect* heirs—for example the cinema.

And here there is another peculiarity, one to which comparatively little attention has been given.

The epoch of victorious socialism is the only epoch that makes it possible to create a comprehensively perfected work in all its manifold aspects.

It is by this standard that we examine and will continue to examine our classics. Reflecting this standard in literature is and will be as manifold as in the perfection of social conditions, and works will be achieved with a full harmony of all elements such as has not been and could not be in previous epochs.

The accomplishment of this in past epochs was extremely rare and accessible exclusively to creative geniuses (this feature being present in them was one of the conditions that determined their genius). But even in these conditions, each of them, even the greatest of writers, bore elements in him that interfered with perfection, elements that did not reach his highest level. Balzac is accused of slovenly literary language, Shakespeare in the compositional negligence and uneven qualities of *Hamlet*\*, Goethe's *Hermann and Dorothea* 'positively impossible to read' and his *Iphigenia in Tauris* 'cannot be staged'. In the works of Kleist has been discovered side by side with his genius an insignificance worthy of Klopstock (Stefan Zweig has written very perceptibly about this), and so on.

The task of the historical-literary critic includes the choice and appraisal of these phenomena. As with Wagner's Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger*, his duties also include the establishment of categories, as well as critical recom-

\* Theoretical conjectures (Aksyonov's for example) have been advanced about the imperfections of the tragedy as it has been handed down to us.

mendations of this or that author. It is here that any disproportions in the wished-for perfection are branded for all to note. The premises and conditions of similarly emerging phenomena are analysed. Here also is an especially severe emphasis on any inadequacy in socially reflecting his epoch, resulting from an excessive enthrallment of the writer's conscience in observing the social limitations of his times, and the difficulties in overcoming these pressures. Lenin's comments on Tolstoy and Engels's strictures on Zola are especially prominent examples of such criticism.

But to *learn* from the classics is an altogether different matter. Here the exaggeration of separate features of a work is by no means an invariably negative phenomenon. In this function it can even be thought of as positively useful, for as an enlarging mirror it helps to discern features which in conditions of ideal harmony are so 'soldered' into the structural whole that to isolate them with the aim of study is an extremely laborious work.

To be brief, one must know what, in each writer, is to be studied. Particularly outside literary study—in study for the cinema's sake.

In this connection all arguments about who is the best writer, or to which writer one must attach oneself, are irrelevant.

What concerns us here is not this or that writer's work as a whole, but the particular features in his creative work that provide illumination on a particular problem—composition or viewpoint, say. Obviously, 'minor' writers will have less to contribute, and the genius of Shakespeare or Tolstoy could teach us much in almost all required problems.

I once conducted a seminar at GIK\* on Emile Zola, in 1928-9. We accomplished a great deal in examining several purely cinematic elements in the plastic side of his creative work, drawing attention to a series of compositional peculiarities that in literature are found almost exclusively in this writer, and that are very close in their nature to cinema. Then, without noting why we had chosen the creative work of Zola to study, several comrades, armed with Engels's well-known quotation on Balzac's superiority to Zola, announced a campaign against our project, declaring that we should be studying Balzac and that an 'orientation' to Zola was 'perverse'.

In the first place, the matter is not one of 'orientation', for we were not making a canonical acceptance of all Zola's work as a unit, but we were studying a series of specific features, illustrated with especial instructiveness in Zola's work. In the second place, the directive by Engels on the superiority of Balzac is centred on one specific exponent: the social-economic documentation that interested Engels was less conspicuous in Zola—along with many other writers.

On the other hand we can find in Zola a huge quantity of elements, extremely important to film-makers, that are quite absent in Balzac's writings. Open to any page of Zola. It is so plastic, so *visually* written that according to it a whole 'scene' could be prepared, starting with the director's instructions (the emotional characteristics of the scene), exact directions to the designer, the lighting cameraman, the set-dresser, the actors and all. Here is such a scene as you can find on every page of Zola; this is the opening of chapter II of *La Terre*:

'Maitre Baillehache, notary of Cloyes, lived on the left-hand side of the Rue Grouaise, on the way to Chateaudun, in a small white one-story house; from a corner hung the solitary street-lamp that lit up the wide paved street, deserted during the week but loud and lively on Saturdays with the influx of peasants on their way to market. The two professional plates were visible from afar, shining against the chalky surface of the low buildings; behind the house, a narrow garden ran right down to the bank of the Loire.

On this particular Saturday, in the room to the right of the entrance hall, over-

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\* State Institute of Cinematography.

looking the street, the under-clerk, a pale puny lad of fifteen, had lifted one of the muslin curtains to watch the people passing. The other two town clerks, an old man, pot-bellied and dirty, and a younger man, emaciated, ravaged with liver-trouble, were busy writing at a double desk of ebonised deal, the only piece of furniture in the room except for seven or eight chairs and a cast-iron stove which was never lighted until December, even if snow fell on All Saints' Day. The pigeonholes covering the walls, the greenish cardboard boxes, broken at the corners and bursting with yellowed papers, fouled the atmosphere of the room with a smell of sour ink and dust-eaten paper.\*

Compare this with any of the most brilliant pages of Balzac: its visual embodiment seems so grandiose, so literary, that it is not *directly* transferable to a system of visual images. Read this opening of *La Peau de Chagrin*:

Towards the close of October 1829, a young man entered the Palais Royal at the hour when the gaming houses opened their doors in compliance with the law which protects an essentially taxable passion. Without undue hesitation, he went up the stairway leading to a gambling den known as Number Thirty-six.

"Your hat, please, sir", a little old man called to him curtly and querulously. His face was cadaverous and he crouched in the shadows behind a railing. Suddenly, he rose, exhibiting a degraded countenance.†

That's all very well, I am told—this is not merely a matter of plasticity; what is basic are the images and characters of people, and in this Balzac is superior to Zola.

Exactly! In seeking characters we turn to Balzac, but for the plastic of film style to Zola—and first of all to Zola.

But there is another element, closely connected with character, that we seek in Zola: this is the ability to link man plastically with his environment.

We hear too often of the 'incompleteness' of a person as outlined by Zola—compared with the 'deep relief' of a Balzac character.

A personage in Balzac, thanks to his manner of exposition, always reminds me of the fat señor painted by Velasquez (perhaps because of a resemblance to Balzac himself?). Old Goriot, and Vautrin, and Father Grandet, and Cousin Bette, and Cousin Pons, and Cesare Birotteau all resemble the Velasquez personage—three-dimensional, seen at full height on a pedestal, in boots and sword, characterised to the last ringlet or whisker, mitten or glove.

In recalling the personages of Zola they can invariably be imagined in styles dear to him—expressed by Degas or Manet, particularly Manet. And, if I may say so, most of all in the manner of his *Bar at the Moulin Rouge*.‡ Their incompleteness seems the same as the incompleteness of the painted girl behind the bar. She seems cut by the counter. It is also an incomplete figure who looks at her friend, the waitress, from another part of the painting, where legs are cut by the picture frame, and the left breast is covered by the round head of a drinking guest.

It would never occur to anyone to think of this girl as, anatomically, a half-girl. Nor do we think of the engulfing shadow on the face of a Rembrandt sitter as being an absence of part of the jaw, the temple, the forehead or the eye deep in the eye-socket—all this being particularly prominent in the etchings.

Obviously, what Manet gives us are 'clots' of real detail—the personage in 'close-up'—for it is no accident that the painting of Zola's time is linked with those masters of the close-up—the Japanese artists of the wood-block. Though

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\* *Earth*, translated by Ann Lindsay (Elek Books, 1954).

† *The Fatal Skin*, translated by Cedar Paul (Hamish Hamilton, 1949).

‡ Writing from memory and far from his Moscow library, Eisenstein has unwittingly synthesised in these notes two Manet paintings, the *Bar at the Moulin Rouge* and the *Bar at the Folies-Bergere*.—J.L.

Manet's image may not be fully drawn, it cannot be said to be undetermined. It is rounded off with the counter of the bar, the reflection in the mirror behind the girl, the tankard of beer, and the guest's head so craftily concealing the girl's breast. Even the image of a subsidiary figure is drawn with the customary complex of elements that is inseparable from the central personage.

Balzac is no less accurate in defining the elements connected with the habits and actions of a person. But Balzac only *names* these, as if describing the supplying firm, their method of ordering, often with attached prices—you almost expect catalogue numbers. So that Balzac gives you the person and all pertaining to him—objects, habits, setting, all gathered by him into a picture, the legs of his personage hidden by the edge of the table, the personage himself hidden in a detailed description of the wall's upholstery, the objects arranged in methodical order. For our art Balzac's method does not give us much help.

On the other hand Zola takes you *into* the image; for example, Nana at the horse-race—though the race is just as much a race as she is Nana, they cannot be taken apart. And Zola cuts his way into your visual memory with an unforgettable 'shot', as when the black figure of Eugène Rougon casts its shadow across the white sculptures in the Chambre, or when the carnally red tonality flows into Nôtre Dame in the scene of the christening of Napoleon III's son. Les Rougon-Macquart are not merely providing a commentary on a full socio-economic picture of Napoleon III's epoch, but encourage each reader—especially with such a purpose as ours—to do our own creative work. This gives us more than the full personality of Nucingen writing to a Sachar.

So we return to our premises: to ask of each writer that quality that makes him a master. And to leave to the literary critic those matters of spectacted calculation—such as giving each writer his place 'in the ranks', or defining his degree of greatness.

No, please: do not confuse the addresses. Do not demand of Flaubert the virtues of Gogol—do not seek in Dostoevsky lessons in the art of Tolstoy—and vice versa! That is as unreasonable as to want apples in the spring, or snow in the summer.

What we need is a 'cinematographer's guide' to the classics of literature. And to painting, too. And to theatre. And music. How fascinating, for example, to define in detail what can be learned in Repin's work as distinct from Serov's. What can be learned from Bach as distinct from Wagner. From Ben Jonson as distinct from Shakespeare.

We must learn in the way that Busygin writes with such modesty in his autobiography: 'At the Industrial Academy the chief thing I'm learning—is how to learn.'

We must study how to read.

This is essential in order to write:

for a writer—the pages of a literary scenario (or treatment).

for a director—the sheets of a shooting-script, or the shots in preliminary sketch, or completed images on the canvas of the screen.

Literature *per se* has as many means and circuitous expositions as there are ways of perception. But without our premise these mingled forms remain closed to us.

For film-writing the responsibility expands immeasurably.

The greatness of Pushkin is not for films—but how filmic!

That is why we begin with Pushkin.

—Kokand, Uzbekistan.

October 13, 1939.



# Surveys and Reviews

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## A NEED FOR DEBATE

V. Yermilov

*During the discussions on ideological questions that have taken place in recent months between Soviet artists and writers and leaders of the Communist Party, the memoirs of Ilya Ehrenburg have been a focal centre. So that readers may understand why, we are publishing below extracts from a major criticism of his book by V. Yermilov, the critic, whose visit to this country for the Tolstoy anniversary will be recalled with pleasure by many.*

*Regular readers know that this journal has great admiration for Ehrenburg's talent as a writer and publicist, and that we have published many articles by him over the years which we felt threw a revealing light on aspects of the Soviet scene. The several volumes of his People, Years and Life have been or are being translated and published in this country and are thus available to readers. Ehrenburg's views, expressed in them, have received wide publicity in the British press and have been used as the foundation for many general and sweeping judgments on Soviet society in the various reviews that have been published here. The criticisms of the book made in the USSR, however, have not been so widely disseminated and are not so easily accessible to readers. Nor have they been quoted without a considerable element of distortion or hostility.*

*Yermilov's article, which appeared in Izvestia on January 30, for example, has been characterised in Encounter (April) by Miss Patricia Blake, the American co-editor of Dissonant Voices in Soviet Literature, as 'the most scurrilous' of 'a series of articles . . . abusing Ehrenburg in highly chauvinistic terms for having "betrayed" the great traditions of Russian realism'.*

*Ehrenburg himself took offence at Yermilov's article and accused him of personal denigration. Therefore, following the extracts from Yermilov's article we publish the whole of Ehrenburg's letter of protest to the editors of Izvestia.*

**I**LYA EHRENBURG'S memoirs *People, Years and Life* . . . are in many respects a valuable and absorbing piece of writing that reveals new facets of the author's talent. His skill in character portrayal has grown enormously. A great number of the many different people who played a prominent part in the artistic, cultural, ideological and political life of his time figure in his reminiscences. Naturally they are, for the most part, writers, painters, musicians, producers and actors. Ehrenburg writes of them with sincere affection, at times with reverential respect. He is passionately fond of some and full of respect for others; but he also records what he feels were their weaknesses and shortcomings. He conveys their enthusiasm for their far from easy work, their passionate thought and concern for the arts and their period, and their striving to understand *people, the times and life*. In spite of the personal characteristics that make each of the artists to whom Ehrenburg introduces us so individual, we find many qualities making them akin. First, there is the heightened awareness inherent in the very nature of the artist. There is the incessant searching,



the restless, often tortured, quest for an answer to the problem of the relationship between art and life, and the position of art and the artist and humanism, in a complex, contradictory and in many ways tragic age which was also passionately seeking the truth of life.

Among the portraits that Ehrenburg paints so lovingly are those of people whose very names arouse a special emotion in the reader, a sense of bitter loss and sorrow, and a feeling of deep affection. Babel, Meyerhold, Tabidze, Yashvili, Markish and Mandelstam were artists—all innocent—who perished in the period of the cult of Stalin. Our times (marked by the twentieth and twenty-second Congresses of the CPSU) have given us the opportunity to speak the bitter truth about the fate of those remarkable men, and to express our pride in their devoted work and their humanism. . . .

Yet, despite their many merits, Ehrenburg's memoirs possess inner contradictions that to some extent violate artistic unity and integrity; the artistic principle itself is not altogether clear.

*People, Years and Life* is constructed according to the law of memoirs. But within the genre we find that another literary genre has 'unobtrusively' crept in—a treatise on art: a treatise on the art of our epoch and what it should be like. Laying down the law on artistic views is incompatible with art in general; and when an author's aesthetic views are aired casually, in the general flow of reminiscence, what we have is in effect a laying down of the law, since neither analysis, argument nor proof is offered. And when it comes to the views on art that Ehrenburg lays down for our epoch, a need for debate arises.

The author of *People, Years and Life* gives pride of place to modernistic art in its various aspects, as if modernistic art were the most representative of the period and its searchings and thinking. Cubism is presented mainly in a positive light. It was Cubism, Ehrenburg feels, that made it possible to express the major events of the age and to 'show the face of war'. . . . (He) not only praises artists who were linked in one way or another with Cubism, but regards Cubism itself as an extremely fruitful movement in art. However, the relations between great artists and any 'ism' are always infinitely more involved and contradictory than Ehrenburg pictures. Not infrequently an explosion of canons from within, violating one 'ism' or another, brings the artist victory. Inasmuch as it is not only a matter of one or two works but of definite æsthetic programmes, it might have been well if the author of *People, Years and Life* had examined the substance of modernistic concepts.

We find the same kind of laying down of the law in connection with another modernistic trend—surrealism. . . . Is it possible to say [as Ehrenburg does—*Ed.*] that surrealism produced poets like Eluard and Aragon? Would it not be more true to say that socialist realism drew these poets away from surrealism? But of realism and its fruitfulness Ehrenburg does not speak. He happily declares that modernistic art taught this artist or that 'a great deal', implying that realism did not teach anyone anything. Again and again we unfortunately find Ehrenburg making unsubstantiated statements. But there are artists in the West who complain of the 'abstractionist terror' that strives like a despot or a monopoly to crush all other movements in art. . . .

In his portrayal of the artistic life of the early years after the revolution, the author of *People, Years and Life* sees and emphasises primarily the activity of representatives of the different modernistic movements—the Cubists, Futurists, Suprematists and Jacks-of-Diamonds. . . . Unfortunately, all Ehrenburg saw were the Futurists, Cubists and Suprematists. He did not see the way in which the new art, the art of the revolution, was developing and seeking the path it would take. In discussing artistic life in the first years after the revolution, how can one see modernistic movements and fail to see Blok's poem *The Twelve* and its influence on the entire development of Soviet art? Ehrenburg speaks of his

ideological doubts in the year 1921, and of the 'intellectuals who accepted the October revolution but at the same time were filled with doubt. When one rereads the early stories of Vsevolod Ivanov, Malyshkin, Pilnyak or Ognev, or the early poetry of Tikhonov, it becomes clear that those doubts arose from that craving to approach the facts critically about which Lenin spoke.' Ehrenburg insists that the writers whom he mentions have the same doubts as himself. He highlights the doubts of the writers who played an historic role in establishing the new literature, but plays down the most important thing—their passionate and poetic affirmation of the new world and the laying of the foundations of the new literature. Perhaps that is explained simply by the fact that Ehrenburg did not take an active part in many of the events in the development of our literature.

No, it is not doubt, but joy in the difficult, the need to break virgin ground, and affirmation of a new world, of new people and new attitudes to life, that are primarily characteristic of the writing of Vsevolod Ivanov, Alexander Malyshkin, Nikolai Tikhonov and Nikolai Ognev, and of Konstantin Fedin, Leonid Leonov and Lydia Seifullina, all members of the intelligentsia of which Ehrenburg speaks.

The author of *People, Years and Life* is enthusiastic when he explains modernistic movements in the West in relation to life in the West. . . . But there is no enthusiastic explanation of the new Russian art and the soil in which it flourished or of its connection with the new historical situation and with the earlier ideological and artistic development of Russian literature. Modernistic movements were unable to take root in the soil of revolutionary reality; they quickly faded from the scene, primarily because the new art was faced by a new world, by ideals of remarkable breadth and complexity, and by a new hero whose thoughts and feelings strove to encompass everything in the world and to establish justice and freedom in real life and not in dreams and modernistic abstractions. The ideals toward which the age strove had been evolved and achieved through much suffering during the entire previous development of Russian thought and Russian literature. The latter was a realistic literature for the very reason that it strove to achieve real happiness for the people in this world, the real world. No other literature did so much to prepare the way for human beings who would be free of the pettiness, narrow-mindedness and selfishness of the old world than Russian realistic literature, the literature of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov and Gorky. It purified the soul of mankind. Then men with a great romantic dream and great realistic activity came on the scene. It was natural that the great Russian literature of the past should be dear to them. How could that dream, that action, those ideals and those traditions fit into a modernistic framework? It was because the new revolutionary literature expressed the birth of such men, and of that dream and that action, that it was able to exert such a paramount influence on the development of world literature. Historical exactitude and internationalism demand that we should understand how the literature to which the October revolution gave birth influenced the development of world literature. But no place is found in Ehrenburg's memoirs for an event of such magnitude in the development of Russian and world literature as Sholokhov's brilliant *Quiet Flows the Don*. Ehrenburg's tendency to lay down the law is seen in things like his emphatic declaration that Tolstoy's sentence structure *cannot* be used in portraying contemporary life. But why not? Tolstoy's involved, yet simple, sentences expressed his effort to reflect as many aspects of life and as many relations and implications as possible at each moment. But it is just as absurd, in my view, to foist Tolstoy's sentence structure on to a writer as it is to forbid him to use it.

Unfortunately, we find an over-simplification of a number of major problems, of a number of controversies and of questions concerning the ethics of the

artist (what should an artist's life be like?) in Ehrenburg's memoirs. . . . And there is a motif that runs through them like a refrain that is not quite clear. This is the need for the writer to keep silent in certain difficult historical circumstances; it is like an inner submission to those circumstances. Ehrenburg writes that in 1917-8 he 'did not bewail estates, factories or shares. I was poor, and had always despised wealth. Something else disturbed me. I had grown up with the concept of freedom we had inherited from the nineteenth century. From the time I was a boy I had respected lack of respect and heeded the voice of disobedience. I did not realise that concepts were changing along with ways of life. The new century brought much and carried much away.' . . .

It is not clear what concept of freedom inherited from the nineteenth century Ehrenburg is talking about. The concept of true freedom in the nineteenth century was formulated by Marx and Engels, and in Russia by Belinsky, Herzen, Dobrolyubov, and the whole of Russian democratic literature. The new century did not demand that that concept of freedom be repudiated. On the contrary, the freedom for which Russian culture had striven was now made the order of the day in the revolutionary transformation of life; the greatest freedom of the individual became possible only after freedom for the entire people was attained. That became the content of the new art. And only a revolutionary, innovative reworking of the great earlier realistic traditions that are bound up with the ideals of true freedom and with broad, deep social thought could, of course, create new forms for the new content.

There is something else that is not clear. Ehrenburg says that twenty years after 1917-8, i.e. in 1937-8, he realised that one must know how to live with clenched teeth, that is to keep silent; that there is no need to underline 'mistakes' since history does not always unfold the way one may wish it to, and that nothing can be added to it or subtracted from it. The tragic events of 1937-8 stemming from the Stalin personality cult caused the Soviet people, and Soviet writers among them, deep suffering. But what was most tragic, among other things, was the general confidence in Stalin's rightness, and the belief that whatever was done in his name could not be wrong. No wonder the Party and its Central Committee have called that period the period of a *cult*. There is no other word for it. The doubts that arose in people were suppressed by an inner voice. The doubts grew, however, and they received an answer from the Party at its historic twentieth Congress. If a conscious determination to 'clench one's teeth' and silently turn the 'bitter pages' of history had predominated, that would have meant, for one thing, that it was perfectly clear by 1937-8 that such things as mass reprisals were completely uncalled for. If that had been clear at the time, however, the ethical principle of 'learning to live with clenched teeth' would not have stood up to ethical criticism. Ehrenburg is over-simplifying a tragedy. . . .

Ehrenburg asks his readers questions connected with an evaluation of his work. 'Is it true that I am a sceptic, a cynic, a nihilist?' In his writing, he says, he has pointed out the good and the bad in life, and declared that people need both an 'exposure of the vices, mental deficiencies and ulcers of society' and an 'affirmation of nobility, beauty and harmony'. That is undoubtedly true. . . .

But for a long time now no one has thought of Ehrenburg as a sceptic, a cynic, a nihilist, or any expert in showing up the vices, mental deficiencies or ulcers of society. Ilya Ehrenburg is a kind (with a kindness that at times has a touch of the sentimental—which cannot, certainly, be considered a virtue), highly gifted writer, with a desire to affirm what is sincere and happy. His memoirs are interesting and significant, often engrossing. If what he says is wrong and provokes protest or doubt in the reader, I am sure Ehrenburg understands full well that the urge to disagree with him is prompted by respect for his work.

## Ehrenburg's Reply

*On February 6 Izvestia published a letter of protest from Ehrenburg with a lengthy rejoinder from Yermilov and a postscript by the editors.*

I HAVE no intention (Ehrenburg wrote) of objecting to those parts of the article where V. Yermilov speaks as a literary critic. However, a considerable part of the article has nothing to do with my work. With his insinuations Yermilov has been trying to insult me as a man and as a Soviet citizen. I am compelled to reply to that.

Repeatedly quoting my words about the necessity, during the period of the personality cult, to live, work and fight with clenched teeth, Yermilov failed even once to mention the fact that during that period I was mainly among the enemies of my country or at the front (in the pre-war years I was a Paris correspondent and a war correspondent in Spain for the very newspaper that featured Yermilov's article).

I wrote: ' . . . I thought that I would have to be silent for a long time. In Spain the people were fighting, and I would have nobody to share my experiences with.'

Now, about the substance of the matter. Concerning the events of 1937-8, Yermilov wrote: ' Ehrenburg must have a great advantage over the overwhelming majority of ordinary Soviet people who in those years had no doubt of the correctness of the " men in command " . What the ordinary Soviet people felt at that time was bitterness and shock that so many had proven to be enemies of the people. But if they doubted the correctness of some action, many battled for justice to be shown to people who they were confident were not enemies. They fought, but they did not fight by keeping silent. . . . Speeches were made at meetings and articles written in the papers which, although they might protest against some fact or event, were in fact a protest against the substance of the Stalin personality cult.'

In my book I wrote about how hardly our soldiers fighting in Spain, and our writers and journalists in Moscow, took the arrest of one man or another of whose innocence they were convinced. We frequently spoke about that among ourselves, but had no way of voicing our protest in public. At no meeting I attended did anybody protest against the persecution of comrades whose innocence they did not doubt. Not once did I read any articles which—according to Yermilov—were in fact a protest against the ' substance of the Stalin personality cult '.

Unfortunately, I was not endowed with any special perspicacity, and wrote in my book *People, Years and Life*: ' We thought (probably because we wanted to think that way) that Stalin knew nothing of the senseless reprisals against Communists and Soviet intellectuals. Not only I, but many, thought that the whole trouble came from the little man whom the people called " Stalin's People's Commissar " . We saw people arrested who had never adhered to any opposition, loyal devotees of Stalin or honest non-Party specialists. The people dubbed those years the " Yezhov period " .'

After the twentieth and twenty-second Congresses I learned of the letters that had been addressed to Stalin by Postyshev and Eiche, who obviously shared the delusions of many and paid with their lives for their courage. There were also heroes, no doubt, among ordinary Soviet people who tried to open Stalin's eyes to the fact that crimes were being committed in the country, and who shared the fate of Postyshev and Eiche.

The circulation of *Izvestia* is far larger than that of the magazine in which *People, Years and Life* is being published, and that forces me to cite a long paragraph from my book, recalling my attitude towards the past and the present.

' I knew that trouble had started, and I also knew that neither I nor my

friends, nor our entire people, would ever renounce the October revolution, that no crimes committed by some people, none of the many things that had crippled our life, could make us swerve from our great and difficult path. There were days when I did not feel like living any longer, but even then I knew that I had chosen the right road.

‘After the twentieth Congress of the Party I met acquaintances and friends abroad; some of them asked me, and themselves too, whether a mortal blow had not been dealt to the very idea of communism. There was something they could not understand. I, an old non-Party writer, know that the idea proved to be so strong that some communists took it upon themselves to tell our people and the whole world about the past crimes, the distortions of the philosophy of communism and its principles of justice, solidarity and humanism. In spite of the odds, our people went on building their house, and a few years later repulsed the fascist invasion, and finished building the house that our young men and women, who knew none of the cruel delusions of the past, are now living in, studying in, arguing and debating in.’

Wishing to discredit me, Yermilov has, I believe, unwittingly cast aspersions on the people of my generation; and I want my letter, like my book, to show the youth who have entered life in a far easier and cleaner era the conditions under which we had to live and fight.

### The Rejoinder

*This final sentence of Ehrenburg's gives a clue to the whole controversy and explains in part why Ehrenburg appears at the focal centre. The discussion is very much concerned with the views and attitudes of the young generation, particularly its artists, poets and writers. In the first discussion with Party leaders Ehrenburg spoke strongly in support of modernistic trends; in later meetings several young writers vigorously defended his position; a part of the young intelligentsia, it would appear then, have accepted his interpretation of the past. This, being a matter of history and politics, explains in part the sharpness of some of the remarks made to and about him by Ilychov and Khrushchov on March 7 and 8. Ehrenburg's letter, above, also explains the import of Khrushchov's citation of a hitherto unpublished letter to Stalin from Sholokhov, protesting at injustices connected with grain deliveries in the Don country in the early thirties. We have not space to quote from these two speeches. Their texts, however, have been published in Soviet News, and they are available for consultation in the SCR Library, together with translations of earlier speeches by Ilychov and the full text of Yermilov's article.*

*The editors of Izvestia showed Ehrenburg's letter to Yermilov and gave the latter space for a rejoinder, from which our last quotations are taken. A postscript by the editors regretted Ehrenburg's position, felt his accusations against Yermilov unjustified, and wished that he had entered into a real debate. ‘With his letter’, they concluded, ‘Ehrenburg says: as I have thought, so I will continue. Well, that is his right. But in that case a critic has the right to write resolutely about some of the erroneous tendencies in his position.’ In his rejoinder Yermilov said, among other things:*

**E**HRENBURG presents the heart of the matter as though there were no concept of silence at all in his memoirs. . . . Let us sort this out. Is there, or is there not, a concept of silence as a kind of ethical principle of the author's? Or do the memoirs merely give vent to his reflections on the subject of silence in connection with his stay at the front in Spain and ‘among the enemies of his country? . . .’

*After citing extensively from the memoirs and Ehrenburg's letter, Yermilov continued:*



Again and again Ehrenburg puts himself in the position of a man who realised very well that senseless reprisals were taking place, that evil was being done, and who decided to 'keep silent' about it. He did not believe Yezhov, who arrested innocent people. But the people had called Yezhov 'Stalin's People's Commissar'. That meant, in those days, that the people still trusted Yezhov. They felt bitterness and shock that so many had proved to be enemies of the people. They were filled with indignation at some of Yezhov's actions. But they did not know then that evil was the mainspring of his actions. Did Ehrenburg, as it appears, already know that then?

I must say that I do not believe that Ehrenburg's position was what it appears to be in his memoirs and the letter to the editors. Actually he must have experienced what everybody else did, and he was hardly endowed with 'any special perspicacity', as he would have us believe. Clearly, Ehrenburg has been carried away by his concept of silence to such an extent that he has not noticed that he was accusing himself. We cannot but admit that he does this with remarkable persistence and selfless ruthlessness. If we were to follow his text faithfully we should come to no other conclusion than that he had been endowed with a 'special perspicacity' or, as I wrote, 'advantage'. Wherein lies my insinuation? . . . Who is insulting and slandering whom? It is Ehrenburg who in the first place is insulting and slandering himself. . . .

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### THREE POETS OF STUBBORN INTEGRITY

HENRY KAMEN has translated all the later poems of Pasternak, and done it very well. *In the Interlude*\* is the first book of Pasternak's poems in English versions that can be thoroughly recommended. It sustains the intellectual concision and clarity of the originals, and at the same time carries over something, if not all, of the musical quality. In his poetry Pasternak could keep at the centre of his creative struggle without being diverted by petty or tangential impulses as happens accumulatively in *Zhivago*. The commentary, however, tries to lessen the impact of the poems by attaching anti-Soviet tags.

There is a tragic element in the poems, and yet all the while Pasternak is seeking to overcome tragedy by stoic acceptance: something which he fails to define constantly in *Zhivago*, but which here comes through. As fellow writers, who knew him well, stressed to me in 1959, his ideal was Goethe, and this essential aspect of his position quite fails to appear in almost all the discussion of his work outside the Soviet Union. It is what, however, lies at the heart of his creativity, his sense of the organic relation between men and nature; and it gives the force to his lines written in January 1959 on the Nobel Prize:

Is there some ill I've committed?  
Am I a murderer, miscreant?  
For I have made the whole world weep  
Over the beauty of my land.

But even at the very grace  
I trust the time shall come to be  
When over malice, over wrong,  
The good shall win its victory.

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\* *In the Interlude. Poems*, 1945-60. Boris Pasternak, translated by Henry Kamen. (OUP. 264 pp. 6/-.)



With the poems of Yevtushenko in the small Penguin selection\* we are not really so far from that; and this point brings out the deep extent to which Pasternak is in essence a part of the Soviet scene, and not its opponent. But here the stoical resistance has lost its last heady bitterness of meditative withdrawal and carries over its attitudes into active participation. Yevtushenko is a young poet, but he has already in many poems given the typical and precise expression to the feelings of his generation which has the note of a classic. And as there is no sign that his vast popularity has unbalanced him, we may expect much yet to come from him. Whereas Kamen in his Pasternak versions keeps close to the form of the original, the translators here, less skilful, have chosen to use a loose form which lays all emphasis on the casual immediate aspects. This no doubt helps to get Yevtushenko across in Britain and to make him seem more akin than he is to the trend of what we may call improvisation—one of the fashionable trends at the moment on our world. Against this gain of topicality we must set the loss of his clear-cut and compact organisation in verse-form.

Honesty is one of the characteristics that make Yevtushenko's work; but to tell the truth one must first of all know what the truth is, and that is not such an easy matter as it may sound. Why Yevtushenko's verse rings true is because, while on the one hand he is determined to distort nothing for motives of fear or favour, he is passionately involved on the other hand in the building of the new communist world. His protests are one with his fervours, and this is what gives the unity, the sometimes classic force of his statements. There is nothing of the element of suffering egoism which intrudes to confuse and dwarf *Zhivago*; the resistance here comes from a simple resolve to be true at all costs to communist ideals. The element of simplicity misleads the translators into calling him a 'middlebrow', a meaningless term in this context. At his best he owns the power to use the clear factual images with a series of overtones and to convey powerfully the complex set of balances and unbalances that constitutes the changing and developing relation of self and world.

For all the difference in historical situation, there is again a kinship between these two poets and Shevchenko†. There is the same stubborn integrity, the struggle to embody the whole experiences of an epoch, a people, without the loss of personal intensity. Vera Rich translates a considerable body of Shevchenko's work. Her versions are always readable, but with an excessive use of semi-rhymes (such as Don-home, rich-silk, last-trance‡) and an insufficiency of musical flow. However, we must be grateful for this book, which enables us at last to realise the range and force of Shevchenko's work. He was far more than a singer able to carry over and adapt folk forms; there is a sustained energy, lyrical, narrative, satirical, in his longer poems, such as *The Dream*, *The Great Vault*, *The Caucasus*. We are convinced of the poet's greatness.

JACK LINDSAY.

## A GENTRY REVOLUTIONARY

TO encompass the mind of a man like Herzen needs a tremendously wide mental grasp, and Mr. Malia cannot be said to have managed it, but his ambition should be applauded: he has tried to write an intellectual bio-

\* *Selected Poems*. Y. Yevtushenko, translated by R. Milner-Gulland and P. Levi. (Penguin. 92 pp. 2/6.)

† *Song Out of Darkness*. Taras Shevchenko, translated by Vera Rich. (Mitre Press. 160 pp. 16/-.)

‡ It is not enough to point to 'imperfect rhymes' in the originals; we must consider the differences in the traditions of Ukrainian and English in such a matter.

graphy\* covering the formative years of Herzen's life and the years of his maturity, and not merely an account of his everyday existence. Herzen could not but gain by this treatment, whatever the shortcomings of the author's method. His private life may lend itself to ironical narrative, and particularly his marriage, which began with romantic idealism and ended with a banal adultery, but his intellectual life was an epitome of Russian intellectual life from the time of the Decembrists to that of the first social democrats. He died in 1870.

It was men like Herzen who spread the idea that something had to be done about social wrong and so prompted the question 'What is to be done?' The moral imperative came first. Mr. Malia knows this, but he thinks he is the only one to know it; the result is much beating about the bush. Declaring that, according to some persons unnamed, political philosophies are the direct expression of social classes, he sets out to show that this is an error. Had he started from Lenin's remark that the self-interest of the working class finds direct expression in trade union militancy, not in socialist theory, he could have avoided fruitless argument. As it is, once on his hobby horse he will stop at nothing short of the claim that the Russian revolution was the work of the intelligentsia (p. 5), with special emphasis on the gentry intellectuals.

Mr. Malia has a weakness for the gentry. He also likes a sort of moral anarchy which he calls 'existential egoism' (p. 382), and a sort of liberalism which finds expression in the choice of the middling, medium or moderate option. He dislikes German idealism and falls short of clarity in his account of it. The glimpses he gives of French eighteenth-century radical thought are out of focus: Diderot is declared 'cold' and Rousseau is saddled with the belief that morality merely means following one's instinct; but the central chapters on Herzen's intellectual activities in Russia and his relations with the Slavophiles and the westerners are substantial. Herzen's mind was wide and deep. We reach the author's limits before we reach his. All the same, Mr. Malia has managed to put a good deal of the original into his portrait and conveys the impression of a man of commanding moral and intellectual stature.

There is a useful bibliographical note on editions of Herzen's work and books concerning Herzen published in the USSR.

J. S. SPINK.

## ICONS

TITLED *Holy Icons in the Religious Art of the Eastern Church*,† a little book belonging to the 'Orbis Pictus' series and nicely printed in Switzerland is a good bargain for two reasons. Firstly, you will find in it twenty-two plates, with high-standard multicoloured reproductions of icons from Byzantium, Crete, the Greek islands, Russia, Serbia and Rumania; secondly, Miss Doris Wild provides not only a comprehensive nine pages of introduction to the subject, but also an intelligent description of each plate. The originals of the plates are all in private collections in Switzerland, and their juxtaposition in this book testifies to a relatively wide selective choice embracing half a dozen countries of their origin, and they range in time from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century.

The closing date of 1844 relates no longer to icons in the accepted sense, but

\* *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism, 1812-1855*. Martin Malia. (Harvard UP; OUP. ix+486 pp. 55/-.)

† *Holy Icons in the Religious Art of the Eastern Church*. Doris Wild. (Hallwag, Berne; distributed by Edward Stanford Ltd. 27 pp. 22 plates. 8/6.)

to a Rumanian peasant painting behind glass, *St. George and Theodore Tiro*. This type of folk art still survives today under the sway of both the Greek and the Roman churches (e.g. in Poland). It proves the tenacity of theological metaphysics, but its heyday was nearly 500 years ago, when it expressed and was fully adjusted to utopian social strivings. In the work of Rublev (unrepresented in Swiss collections) this *primum mobile* of this art found its inner harmony, which we call grace. The feudal cosmopolitism of the Eastern church, watchful for the slightest movement of revolt, ossified the continuum of icon art. The Mount Athos manual of icon painters was one of its instruments in this art-killing job. With this in mind, it is interesting to study these icons and see how, through the medium of religious form, anonymous painters were, consciously or otherwise, translating the anti-feudal aspirations of illiterate Russian or Rumanian serfs into familiar images which reflected their own social drama and offered hope of victory over 'antichrist' who denied them conditions worthy of man.

The anti-feudal peasant revolutions under Stenka Razin in the seventeenth century and under Emelyan Pugachov in the eighteenth carried holy icons as their 'Red Flag'. The Bloody Sunday demonstrations outside the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg on January 9, 1905, were the last ever to do so, in the revolution which Lenin called a 'dress rehearsal' for 1917, with its victorious Red Flag.

S. OSIAKOVSKI

## MONGOL CONQUERORS

**S** EVEN centuries ago the East Anglian herring fisheries were in the doldrums. The usual traders from Scandinavia and Germany had failed to arrive to buy the herring catch: they dared not come to Yarmouth, for fear of the Mongols in their rear. According to the Latin chroniclers, the Mongols had broken loose from their mountain homeland and poured like devils across the face of the earth.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were periods of great consequence in the history of the Mongolian people. Strife between independent tribes ended with their unification under the rule of Temujin, the nomad chieftain who was proclaimed supreme khan in 1206 and who adopted the title Genghis Khan. The founding of the single state accelerated the development of the Mongols into a nation. Subsequent conquests by Genghis and his successors led to the creation of four empires, in Central Asia, Russia, China and Persia. This period of aggression drained Mongolia of people, and political and commercial interest was diverted from there to the main centres of the Mongol empires. After a century or so the Genghisid rulers were overthrown and replaced in the main by local dynasties.

Ralph Fox's *Genghis Khan*\* was a pioneering work of the 1930s, which introduced the events of Genghis's lifetime to the general reader. Fox depicted Genghis as a product of his times; there is still little else in the English language that does the job.

Despite subsequent work in this field, the main features of Fox's outline remain valid. And if the generalisations often seem loose, and many of the conclusions sweeping, we must admit that the study of this period and these people is still in its infancy. Until the time of Genghis, the Mongols had no

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\* *Genghis Khan*. Ralph Fox. (Background Books, 1962; first published 1936. 178 pp. 10/6.)

written language, and much Mongol history was written by scholars from among the people they conquered. A recent abridged article on Genghis Khan in the *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL* remarks that his military success 'should be attributed not so much to his own strength as to the weakness of his adversaries'. This may put the emphasis where it is needed, but leaves open the question of what were the most significant factors in this strength-weakness relationship. Fox found something special in the circumstances which produced Genghis and ascribed to him a particular place among the nomad rulers.

The weakness of the adversaries may not have been a feature unique to that period. The qualities which enabled the Mongols to take nearly all Asia as well as a good part of Europe in their stride may not have been the monopoly of a single grouping of nomads, or limited to those particular centuries.

Ralph Fox was an enthusiast; he tells a vivid and vigorous story. In some sections, however—especially the early ones—his style smacks too strongly of the heroic 'thirties, and we feel that the sentiment could have been written tongue in cheek.

The publishers have done well to reissue this work, so long out of print. It whets our appetite for the studies on which Mongolian historians are currently engaged.

H. HOOKHAM.



**A**MONG the formidable tyrants thrown up from time to time by the societies of Central Asia and the Middle East, Tamburlaine, or Timur Leng, the lame Timur, has had a surprisingly good press in the West. For one thing, he defeated and captured Ottoman sultan Bayazid, thus temporarily relieving the relentless Turkish pressure on Byzantium and Christendom generally. He embellished Samarkand, and founded an important dynasty. Some two centuries after his death he featured as the hero of a famous play by Marlowe. In reality Timur seems to have been a sanguinary despot with scarcely a redeeming feature other than personal bravery. The adornment of Timur's capital was carried out at the expense of millions of victims, Christian and Muslim alike, whose homelands his Mongol hordes pillaged with the utmost ferocity. Even in secondary matters he behaved with unusual vindictiveness. Once he tortured to death two architects whose designs displeased him, while some Samarkand townfolk whose humble dwellings stood in the way of his town-planning drive had their roofs torn down over their heads. As conquerors go, Timur belongs rather to the class of Attila the Hun or Adolf Hitler than to that of Napoleon or Alexander the Great.

Nevertheless, Timur's life and times make a fascinating story. His latest biographer, Mrs. Hilda Hookham, has served him well\*—though without in any way glossing over the repulsive nature of his character and methods. Mrs. Hookham, who teaches history at the Girls' Grammar School at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and her husband Maurice, who lectures at the University of Leicester, are well known as tireless travellers and explorers of the remoter corners of the world, especially Soviet Central Asia. Mrs. Hookham has visited many of the places over which Timur once held sway. She has an excellent knowledge of Russian, which enables her to consult many works little known to scholars in the West. Good use is made of contemporary sources, ranging from Arabic

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\* *Tamburlaine the Conqueror*. Hilda Hookham. (Hodder and Stoughton. 344 pp., illus 35/-.)

chronicles to the reminiscences of a Castilian envoy and a Bavarian squire. The social background is sketched in most effectively, though one would have wished for rather more in the way of systematic analysis of the political and economic structure of the Timurid state and the long-term effects of the Timurid invasions on the peoples of Iran, the Caucasus and India.

The book is supplied with a bibliography, an index and a chronological table; it is illustrated with sketch maps and excellent photographs, some from Persian illuminated manuscripts. It forms a valuable addition to any library concerned with the history of the Muslim East and of Soviet Central Asia.

D. M. LANG.

## Books

### BOOKS IN RUSSIA

**Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets.** Maurice Friedberg. (Columbia UP. 228pp. 38/-.)

AMERICAN publishers and librarians are displaying a close interest in Soviet publishing activities. In the last twelve months a group of librarians has produced, after a month's investigation, a report on 'Soviet Libraries and Librarianship'. A similar group of publishers has produced a report on 'Book Distribution in the Soviet Union'; and now we have this study from Maurice Friedberg, which covers some of the same ground.

His piece of research scholarship has its origins in the Russian Institute of Columbia University, which supports the 'development of research in the social sciences and the humanities as they relate to Russia and the Soviet Union'.

One has the impression that the librarians and publishers approached their task objectively, for while the latter remark:

'As is the case with all publishing activities, book distribution is considered an instrument serving the cultural, educational and political views of the state, and is controlled from top to bottom by the state with hardly any consideration of profit',

they also say:

'It is remarkable that a system with these and other defects . . . has been able to provide a country as large as the USSR, with its problems of transportation and with a population which a few decades ago was mostly illiterate, at least quantitatively with reading matter on a very substantial scale.'

Mr. Friedberg, however, disfigures his text with such comment as 'Perhaps some

Soviet readers turn to the Russian classics for moral support in an otherwise hopeless conflict with an omnipotent state.' One assumes that he has not shared the privileges of his fellow Americans of carrying out his researches on the spot. His thesis seems to demonstrate that Soviet publishing, once it became a state concern, used the Russian classics to reinforce changing policies. Any intelligent government would do likewise, but Mr. Friedberg searches anxiously for contradictions in official attitudes, and in their changing estimates of a particular writer's value.

In spite of these exercises, the book has its value in its information on Soviet publishing which would be difficult to find elsewhere. The author traces its history from the early years, with glances back to the pre-revolutionary period, explains the growth and specialities of the various publishing houses, and examines the different types of editions put out over the years.

In his chapter on 'Soviet readers' he has to agree with the American publishers when he writes: 'Soviet libraries are busy enterprises', and 'the Soviet public . . . continues to buy huge quantities of books'.

THOMAS RUSSELL.

### NEUROLOGY AND DISEASE

**Lesions of the Nervous System Associated with Internal Diseases.** Z. Lurye. (FLPH. 256pp., illus. 9/6. Available from Central Books.)

THIS is a splendid little book. It deals with neurological manifestations of diseases of the heart, blood, lungs, gastro-



intestinal system, liver, kidneys and endocrine glands, and metabolic disorders. The author considers briefly and concisely the symptomatology, pathogenesis, lesions and treatment, and the book can be read with advantage by general practitioners and specialists. The publication date of the original Russian text is 1960. This means that most of it must have been written some four years ago. Nevertheless it is remarkably up to date.

What a pity that it has been so ill served in translation and production! To mention but a few of the mistranslations: 'high tendon reflexes' for exaggerated tendon jerks, 'interatrial walls' for septa, 'alveoles' for alveoli, 'aortal' for aortic, 'sub-cortical nodules' for basal ganglia, 'singular' for single, 'dextral' and 'sinistral' for right and left, 'concomitant' for associated, 'sensorial' for sensory, 'intercalary' for intercalated, 'deceleration' for slowing, 'œdematic' for œdematous, 'retention' for arrest, 'clottage' for coagulation, 'inappetence' for loss of appetite and so on. The translator, like so

many of her colleagues, seems unaware that scientific English is more laconic than Russian. Thus, 'that offers the ground for assuming that chorea in pregnancy is a relapse of chorea minor' should probably be rendered as 'this suggests that chorea of pregnancy is a recurrence of chorea minor'. The title of the book is inaccurate. It should have possibly been 'Neurological Aspects of Internal Diseases'. Is it really impossible for Russian publishers to engage English-speaking specialists for final vetting of manuscripts?

The production is quite deplorable. Not a single reference is given in a recognised or traceable form. There is neither an authors' nor a subject index, and the reproduction of illustrations renders them next to useless. Numerous misprints suggest perfunctory proof-reading.

In spite of all this the book is almost always intelligible, and readers will certainly benefit from this able account of a difficult and increasingly important subject.

L. CROME.

## SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

### ASTRONOMY . . .

**Physics of Interstellar Space.** S. Pikelner. (FLPH. 229pp. Illus. 6/6. Available from Central Books.)

THIS is another of the English translations of popular astronomical works by Soviet authors. It is, however, somewhat different from its predecessors inasmuch as, although it is non-mathematical, it goes into considerable detail, and the reader who has no previous astronomical knowledge will find some of it difficult. This is not said as a criticism, and in fact it makes the book more valuable, since it goes farther than some elementary introductions.

There are five sections: Planetary Nebulæ, Diffuse Nebulæ, Interstellar Gas, Magnetic Fields in the Galaxy, and the Interstellar Medium—the last chapter dealing also with the evolution of stars and galaxies. The whole field is covered, and work by western scientists is described along with that of Soviet authorities.

Not so very long ago it was tacitly assumed that space must be empty. Nowadays a contrary view is held; there is no such thing as genuinely empty space. Between the planets of our solar system there is a considerable quantity of matter, and there is also matter spread out between the stars. When this matter is sufficiently dense, and is illuminated, it may be seen as a nebula—though planetary nebulæ are of a rather different class, and are really stars with tremendously extended atmospheres. The quantity of interstellar matter in our

Galaxy is comparable with the mass of all the stars combined, and it is becoming increasingly evident that studies of it are of fundamental importance in astrophysics. Pikelner brings all this out, and provides a great deal of information. The translation, by Mary Zirin, is most satisfactory.

The book will be of interest to the serious amateur, and will also be valuable to the student; it may be strongly recommended. The print is very clear and the illustrations are adequate. The only real fault concerns the paper-back binding, which may show imminent signs of disintegration during the first reading; but this is not the author's fault, and it does at least mean that the book can be produced at a price which is remarkably low by modern standards.

PATRICK MOORE.

### ULTRASONICS . . .

**Ultrasound.** Y. Borisov and L. Makarov. Trs. G. Yankovsky. (FLPH. 96pp., illus. 2/6. Available from Central Books.)

ULTRASONICS is that branch of science that deals with sound waves at frequencies higher than the human ear can hear. This frequency (or the number of vibrations per second) is about 15,000 cycles per second for an average human but is higher for some animals, e.g. dogs. One practical application of ultrasonic waves is the sheepdog whistle, which when blown by the shepherd emits a note that only the dog can hear.

There are, however, far more scientific



and technical applications of ultrasonic waves. For example, because sound waves involve vibrations of molecules, if the frequency of the vibrations is raised tremendous accelerations of the molecules are realised. Thus, when a liquid is treated with ultrasonics the molecules vibrate, and if the power level is increased very large tensions and compressions are developed at some points in it, setting up stresses that tear the liquid into hollow bubbles sucking in any dissolved gases of vapour. When these bubbles collapse suddenly shock waves are produced reaching several hundreds of atmospheres. This phenomenon can be used for removing grease and dirt from metal parts, and ultrasonic cleaning is now a well-established industrial technique.

In addition the extremely high stresses produced in a liquid can be used to cause chemical change, since molecules themselves can be broken up. Mixtures can be separated, and in some cases the converse can be achieved—e.g. oil and water can be mixed by subjecting a liquid to ultrasonic vibrations.

If a drill tip is excited by ultrasonics and made to vibrate at a high frequency it has been found that even very hard substances like glass can be drilled. When two pieces of aluminium are pressed together and subjected to similar treatment they can be made to weld together. Another application is one in which human tissue is treated in this way and cauterisation or destruction of malignant or decayed organs or cells is achieved.

Perhaps the most widely used application of ultrasonic waves is at a much lower power level. This is where high-frequency waves are used as in radar, to detect cracks or holes in pieces of metal. Echoes are attained from any defect, and a skilled operator can inspect up to twenty feet inside a steel component.

These applications and many others are described extremely well in this book. It does not pretend to be a treatise for experts in the field, but for anyone with an interest in studying applications of a new branch of science and technology it is one of the best popular expositions available.

The major weakness is that the reader could be left with the impression that all this work is being done only in the USSR; and in the reviewer's own particular field, namely flaw detection in metals, it is already out of date in so far that recent papers from that country and from Germany, Britain and USA report far wider applications and improvements. However, these are matters for the specialists; the newcomer will find this publication of very great interest indeed.

*L. H. WELLS.*

## JOINT RESEARCH . . .

**The Dubna Joint Institute for Nuclear Research.** V. A. Biryukov, E. Lebedenko, E. Ryzhov. (FLPH. 179pp. Unpriced.)

**I**N 1956 representatives of Albania, Bulgaria, the Chinese People's Republic, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, the Korean People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Poland, Rumania and the USSR, joined later by the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, decided to set up the joint Institute for Nuclear Research at Dubna, near Moscow. In this book the first five years of the institute are described, with the aid of many photographs. It gives an impression of the scope of the work of the institute rather than a detailed picture.

The first section deals briefly with the history and organisation and gives a popular description of each of the laboratories and its work. The second section gives a more technical but very brief description of the work carried out and contains reference to the apparatus available. Finally, there is a list of the 809 papers published between March 1956 and March 1961 by scientists from the member states working at the institute.

*SHEILA BRENNER.*

## ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING . . .

**Basic Electrical Engineering.** A. S. Kasatkin and M. Perekalin. (FLPH. 388pp. illus. 21/-)

**T**HIS book surveys the elementary theory behind electrical engineering, with short sections on electronic applications. Descriptions are given of typical plant used in industry.

In each section the treatment of the theory goes only a little higher than Ordinary Level National Certificate in Britain, but the book would have to be supplemented by guidance from a teacher. A surprising aspect of it is the almost complete absence of numerical examples to clarify the algebraic and vectorial analyses. For this reason the book will be a satisfactory reference source for the man already trained who desires to revise some aspect of theory; but without worked examples and problems for a student to tackle it would be of little use to him.

As far as the book goes the treatment appears clear, at any rate to the reviewer, who has the advantage of prior knowledge; but to the student several examples might be necessary to give depth to his reading, and he might find the text difficult.

The book covers a wide field and misses out very little that is important. Starting from definitions of electromotive force, current and resistance, and explanation of

the simple electric circuit, expressions are obtained for power, and explanations given of voltage and power losses. Direct-current networks are analysed using Kirchoff's Laws, determinants being used to solve the simultaneous equations. Circuits are considered where resistances are non-linear functions of current.

On magnetism, the concepts of magnetic field, magnetic circuit and reluctance are explained, and the principles of permanent magnets. The magnetic properties of steels and cast iron are described. A chapter explains the laws of induction and self-induction, and the forces between current-carrying conductors and magnetic fields.

A chapter on condensers explains the concepts of electric field, capacitance, charging of a condenser, electrical properties of insulating materials and variation of current in circuits having capacitance, inductance and resistance. The lack of numerical examples in this chapter could cause confusion, since the authors refer at the beginning to the MKS (metre-kilogram-second) system, but some data on materials are expressed using centimetres, so that these data could not be used as they stand in the formulae derived. Confusion over units provides one of the more difficult obstacles for students, and practice with

numerical problems is essential to acquire skill in using the formulae.

Alternating currents and emf are described, near and effective values, phase difference, resistance and reactance, active and reactive power, and representation by vectors. This is followed by network theory, Kirchoff's Laws being applied by use of algebraic rectorial methods, including use of the  $j$  operator.

Three-phase circuits are dealt with, including balanced and unbalanced loads.

Theoretical methods for treating non-sinusoidal quantities are described, followed by a section on rectifiers. This is accompanied by further work on smoothing circuits (the translator wrongly refers to steel-cored coils, whereas iron is used for such applications). Transient behaviour in AC circuits is considered, followed by a short introduction to switches.

Transformer theory is dealt with, mainly single-phase but with a short section on three-phase, followed by descriptions of construction and cooling, with some details of instrument transformers.

Two chapters cover the principles and construction of induction motors, induction generators and phase shifters, alternators and synchronous motors, and working characteristics of these machines.

## Latest aids to learning Russian the Russian Way

'RUSSIAN AS WE SPEAK IT' has just arrived. It is really contemporary and practical. The price is very moderate—3/6 for a paperback, 7/6 for cloth edition. Other paperbacks in this series at 3/6 are:

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We also have a new 'Easy Russian Reader': HOT STONE, another series of short stories by Soviet authors. This is also a paperback at 3/6. Send for our Russian Catalogue 1963 for details of all our 'Aids.'

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A chapter is devoted to commutator machines, chiefly DC generators and motors, giving principles of operation, windings, effects of armature reaction, characteristics and losses and with a short section on AC commutator motors.

On electronic devices the principles of operation of thermionic diodes and triodes are described, followed by gas-filled devices such as thyratons and mercury-arc rectifiers, with sections on semi-conductors and photoelectric devices.

Simple electronic circuits are described, including amplifiers and oscillators, using thermionic valves and transistors, followed by circuits for using photoelectric tubes and cathode-ray tubes.

The final chapters describe practice in heavy electrical engineering, including switchgear, substations and transmission lines and networks and typical thermal, hydroelectric and nuclear power stations.

Descriptions of instruments, plant and power systems are everywhere clear and easy to understand. The book tries to pack a lot of information into a short space, and as far as it goes it succeeds, but if it is reprinted consideration could well be given to adding numerical examples taken from practice, and a selection of problems with answers for the student to tackle.

W. R. FRANK.

## PROBLEMS OF TEACHING RUSSIAN

**Russkii yazyk dlya studentov-inostrantsev. Sbornik materialov II mezhdunarodnogo seminaru prepodavatelei russkogo yazyka vysshykh uchebnykh zavedenii sotsialisticheskikh stran.** (Russian for Foreign Students. Papers of the II International Seminar of Teachers of Russian in Higher Educational Institutions of Socialist Countries.) (Moscow University Press, 1961. 268pp., illus. Unpriced.)

**T**HIS collection of articles by various hands follows similar volumes in which teachers of Russian to non-Russian students share their experience and discuss methods. The usefulness of the material presented varies as much as in previous collections. On the whole the contributions by writers from the People's Democracies are of little interest to the English reader, but some of those by Russian contributors deal with problems which concern teachers of Russian very much and to which Russian linguists have only relatively recently given much thought (as a result of large-scale teaching of Russian to foreigners resident in the Soviet Union).

The usage of the aspects of the verb is the most important of these, and this is the subject of three of these articles. V. S. Belevitskaya-Khalizeva discusses and gives 'rules' for the choice of aspect in infinitives; E. V. Zakhava-Nekrasova gives a

brief general account of the system of usage of aspects; and A. A. Spagis deals with the usage of the imperfective in describing repeated actions. (Most of the useful points in these articles have been included in A. A. Spagis's recent book *Obrazovanie i upotreblenie vidov glagola*, 1961.) The problem of assimilating stress patterns of Russian words at an early stage in learning the language is considered in an article by V. I. Klepko, but his rough-and-ready linking of stress patterns with various vowels, diphthongs, final consonants, etc., seems unconvincing and likely to lead to confusion.

Other articles of interest deal with intonation, usage of prepositions, direct and indirect speech, and errors of syntax frequently made by non-Russians.

JAMES FORSYTH.

## NOT QUITE FOR BEGINNERS

**Russian: A Beginners' Course.** R. Hingley and T. J. Binyon. (Allen and Unwin. 330pp. 25/-)

**O**NCE upon a time teachers of Russian had to be content with only two of three grammars, such as Semenova, Bondor and Hugo. That time is past. Today grammars of all descriptions, sizes and different approaches are springing up from all parts of the world. Compiled by English, Russian and American authors, they vie with each other in enticing the prospective learner of Russian by seeking to smooth his path in the labyrinths of Russian grammatical rules and constructions.

Mr. Ronald Hingley, already well known through his BBC lessons, is one of the latest in this field with his *Beginners' Course*.

Its approach seems to be different from most beginners' courses, and its attack on Russian grammar is more forceful and less gradual than such a course would warrant. For this reason it may be confusing and difficult for a lone beginner. It presupposes a previous knowledge of grammatical constructions and a certain linguistic background.

On the other hand, it is likely to prove a very useful book for purposes of revision, as in its later parts it groups common difficulties encountered by English students and gives practical hints for overcoming them. Also, the chapter on pronunciation and the emphasis on stress throughout the course are of great value.

Another point of merit lies in the numerous passages of translation into Russian, which are so often lacking in grammars. One would, however, wish for more imaginative texts, which would awaken more interest in the student.

IRINA TIDMARSH.

## RUSSIAN READERS FOR STUDENTS

**Practical Russian** (*Praktika russkoy razgovornoy rechi*). G. Bogatova and others. (FLPH. 1962. 3/6. Available from Collet's.)

**T**HIS new book is the combined effort of six authors who have obviously devoted great care to the selection of the material and its arrangement.

It has several advantages over readers now available for the English student of Russian. It takes him to the Soviet Union, helps him to choose a menu, speak on the 'phone, post letters and parcels, travel both in town and country; takes him on excursions and to places of amusement, and finally to the information bureau in case of difficulty. The varied vocabulary is presented in twenty chapters, each containing a short story followed by conversation passages and useful words and expressions.

An outstanding merit of the book lies in the numerous exercises which follow each text. These are sensibly constructed and graded, and should help the student to understand grammatical difficulties. A key is provided for the self-taught student. The vocabulary is extensive, comprising some 2,800 words which the student must learn sooner or later.

The book could be introduced at an early stage, and should prove very useful to the teacher. Priced at 3/6, it represents very good value.

NINA S. MARKS.

**Ya chitayu po-russkii.** E. A. Azesyan and E. K. Gamotcka. (Friendship University. 126pp. 45kp.).

**Kniga dlya chtyeniya.** Ed. C. V. James and I. B. Faden. (Bradda Books. 96pp. 4/6.)

**T**HIS reader was produced as an aid to teaching Russian to foreign students at the preparatory faculty of Friendship University (students coming to Moscow with no knowledge of Russian study at this faculty for roughly nine months, after which most know the language sufficiently well to begin studying their special subjects). It aims, through reading passages, to introduce gradually adjectival and noun case endings, basic constructions, and the university minimum active vocabulary.

The first seven or eight texts in many readers for beginners are often so simple that they appear childish, and contain phrases which sound foreign to a native speaker; otherwise the author, aware of this danger, introduces too many constructions in too short a time, so that the student has a sketchy, unpractical knowledge of many constructions but no natural, automatic reaction to even the simplest questions. *Ya chitayu po-russkii*

avoids both these dangers. The first seven texts, each containing about 150 words, introduce only a few constructions: the prepositional case of singular nouns, nominative noun plurals, nominative pronouns, nominative singular and plural of adjectives, *u menya*, *u nas*, *u nyego*, *u nikh*. A number of verbs necessary for describing simple actions are also introduced. These first texts describe a student's room, ordering a meal in the faculty canteen, the seasons, description of a friend, two friends completely different in physique and temperament, and catching a bus into the town centre on a Sunday. Admittedly this does not appear breathtaking reading, yet the material in this part of the book is not childish, nor is it written in pidgin Russian.

Another good feature is the way in which constructions and vocabulary are not assumed to be learnt immediately they have been introduced, but appear again and again in later texts in a variety of situations, so that they become part of the student's active rather than passive knowledge. Gradually the texts become more difficult. About seventy out of the 122 passages are adapted extracts from authors such as O. Henry, Polevoi, Marshak, Gorki, St. Exupery, Kuprin and Chekhov. Even in these later texts, however, most of the vocabulary is that which will be most necessary to the student.

In the preparatory faculty, a teacher may be faced with a student whose language he does not know; thus, in the early texts material is such that it can be demonstrated by the teacher or by wall charts. There are no notes or grammatical explanations, since the emphasis is on immediate reaction rather than on thinking out the rules. Although some of the texts are purely local in character, most could be used with great advantage in English schools.

*Kniga dlya chtyeniya* is a reader designed for fifth- and sixth-formers.

All the material has been taken from Soviet sources, which gives the book two attractive features: firstly, the language is Russian as it is spoken today and not archaic or anglicised Russian; secondly, it gives an excellent description of Soviet life in various situations (students' hostel, restaurant, journey by trolleybus, the post office, the Moscow Underground, GUM, etc.). Vocabulary on artistic, scientific, literary, geographical and sporting themes is developed by passages on museums, the first sputnik, authors, towns and regions, and sportsmen.

The print is clear, the design attractive, and at the back is a comprehensive vocabulary.

GLYN JOHN.

**Khrestomatiya po russkomo yazyku.** A. F. Konopyolkina. (Moscow University, 1962. 575pp., illus. 12/6. Available from Collet's.)

THIS book, advertised as a 'bumper reader', is a good investment for the student at the intermediate stage on size alone. It contains over 560 pages of text and exercises, is pleasingly well bound and printed, and includes some reasonable illustrations.

The texts are stressed, with only very few wrong stress positions or omissions. Each passage is followed by notes and exercises (which, curiously, are *not* stressed). Russian is used throughout, and there is no Russian-English vocabulary.

The book might suit evening-class students and those concerned exclusively with learning the modern language. Many of the passages are not of great literary value, and even when they are they have been adapted from the original or are excerpts (also adapted) from longer works. This unfortunate obsession seems to be firmly entrenched with Soviet publishing houses, who fail to see that such simplified versions of Russian literature cannot be recommended, for example, to university students. The point has been made often enough, but without apparent success.

But then this book is intended for foreigners studying Russian in the Soviet Union, where so much more time is spent in the classroom than is possible or thought desirable here. The sheer bulk of the material does, indeed, present a problem, and the editor's recommendation that teachers select passages from the relevant sections applies with especial force outside the Soviet Union.

There are three parts, preceded by an introductory section containing general passages about Moscow, sputniks, etc., which are harsh going after a year of evening-class studies. The editor claims that the grammatical and lexical material is graded, though one remains unconvinced, especially as regards the usefulness of the vocabulary introduced so early.

Part I begins with the inevitable crop of anecdotes about Lenin, but gradually becomes more readable. The passages, which are of very uneven length, include short stories on the level of *Woman's Own*—e.g. *Po semyeynym obshchayatel'stvam* and *Do vostryebvaniya*, and an amusing story about a curious (or typical?) Briton who gets his Soviet bride out by unconventional, in fact illegal, means. There are quite a few stories with no ideological message, and the general tone is less insular than so many Soviet publications. There are sections of fairy tales (not only Russian), of mildly amusing anecdotes, and of proverbs and idioms.

Parts II and III contain excerpts from Soviet and classical Russian literature

respectively, all, alas, adapted—even a scene from *Three Sisters*! The last section contains verse—folk songs and classical and Soviet poetry; one or two received the attention of the adaptor, who, rather wisely, decided not to rewrite the verse of Mayakovsky (though this might have helped the student!).

The book's chief merits are the excellent, well-thought-out and practical exercises, with the passage itself often providing the 'key'. If carried out conscientiously, most of them could be a great help towards acquiring fluency in practical Russian.

It is, then, something of a pot-pourri, and its chief fault is that it tried to do too many things. It fails as an anthology of literature for the reasons stated, but it could be used for teaching purposes, after careful selection has been made. It will also be useful for the reasonably proficient student to browse about in.

PETER HENRY.

**Intermediate Russian Reader.** George Z. Patrick. (Pitman. 333pp. 18/-.)

**Graded Russian Reader, Part III.** Greene and Ward. (Oliver and Boyd. 80pp. 8/6.)

**Short Stories by Soviet Writers.** (FLPH. 107pp. 3/6. Distributed by Collet's.)

THE first of these two readers gives the student a good variety of reading material—prose, poetry, theatre, ranging from Pushkin to the Soviet playwright P. Yaltsev. It can be warmly recommended both for individual study by the student and for classroom work. It includes twenty-four short stories: several by Chekhov, Ilf Petrov, M. Loshchenko, Kuprin, Korolenko and others; eighteen poems by nineteenth- and twentieth-century poets and three one-act plays by Yaltsev and Chekhov.

Unfortunately Mr. Patrick's reader does not include post-war Soviet authors; but in spite of this it offers more than sufficient material for enjoyable reading, and acquaints the student with various aspects of Russian literature.

The text is stressed, but there are no grammatical explanations, no footnotes on the more difficult construction of the sentence or on colloquial expressions. A comprehensive Russian-English vocabulary is provided at the back of the book.

*Graded Russian Reader Part III* consists of nineteen selections, mostly short extracts from prose literature and a few poems. Modern and classical Russian writers are represented: Leo Tolstoy, Pushkin, Paustovsky, Bunin, Anna Akhmatova, Marshak and others. Some of the selections appear in a shortened version; others are left in the original. Each text is followed by comprehensive footnotes on grammar, syntax, phraseology, expressions,



etc. The passages are arranged in order of difficulty, gradually increasing the student's comprehension of the language.

Although there is a great variety of material here, selected with great care, one feels regret that the extracts are very short; and only two short stories, in abridged versions, are included. A student who has reached this level of comprehension might prefer a complete short story to several extracts, which, due to their brevity, become a reading exercise rather than examples of Russian literature.

The Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow has now added a selection of short stories by seven Soviet writers to its series *Russian Readers for Beginners*, which already includes A. Tolstoy's *Nikita's Childhood*, short stories by Chekhov, and two short novels by Turgenev, *Asya* and *First Love*.

The short stories (by Paustovsky, Prishvin and others) are, as usual, adapted and abridged. The text is stressed. Some footnotes are given on each page, but they are not really sufficient to give a student who has worked through elementary Russian enough information for complete understanding of the text.

All seven stories deal with children, animals and birds. Most of them are seen through the eyes of children—for example, Yuri Nagibin's *Nozhnitsi*, which tells of the first steps to independence taken by a little boy, Mitya, when he conquers his fear of a dark storeroom filled with old furniture and inhabited by mice and a spider; or Elena Uspenskaya's story, *Pervenets goroda*, of the emotional upheaval caused by Alyosha's overhearing of a conversation which leads him to believe that he is not the real son of his parents; and Paustovsky's *Rastriopanny vorobei*, with its mixture of fantasy and realism.

The stories are very pleasant to read, but regrettably do not provide sufficient variety of subject matter. However, this little book will be very helpful as supple-

mentary reading for students in their own time, or for class study of a few of the stories. Reading of the entire book in class may prove too monotonous, considering the naïveté of some of the stories, which is magnified by adaptation of the language.

It is hoped that the FLPH will soon bring out a different, more adult, selection of stories by Soviet writers.

LYDIA READ.

**Detstvo.** L. N. Tolstoy. **Asya.** I. S. Turgenev. (Bradda Books. 156 and 188pp., 7/6 and 6/- respectively.)

IT would, of course, be ridiculous to attempt to 'review' these two books. Tolstoy gives perhaps the most charming and the most moving of the various childhood reminiscences in Russian literature. Gorki suffers, brutally and continuously, while Alexei Tolstoy's *Nikita* sounds something hollow and factitious; but the master, in his own *Detstvo*, reflects with Virgilian precision the complicated internal struggles of a sensitive spirit at the mercy of conflicting demands.

Readers of Turgenev will remember *Asya* as a somewhat indeterminate *nouvelle*. That this indeterminacy is quite deliberate is pointed out in the introduction, in which the editor hints at an intention by Turgenev to depict the 'superfluous man'. It is, however, as always, Turgenev's heroine who is the most absorbing character: Asya herself, however sketchily drawn, is much more interesting than the socially significant hero.

These volumes are two in an excellent series of Russian classical texts designed primarily for use in the upper forms of schools, and for other students aspiring perhaps to GCE 'A' level. Each volume contains a short introduction and a very good vocabulary. An invaluable feature of these books, given their purpose, is that the text is stressed throughout.

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